

rocky hill

LIFE

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cames for decades

See story on page 41

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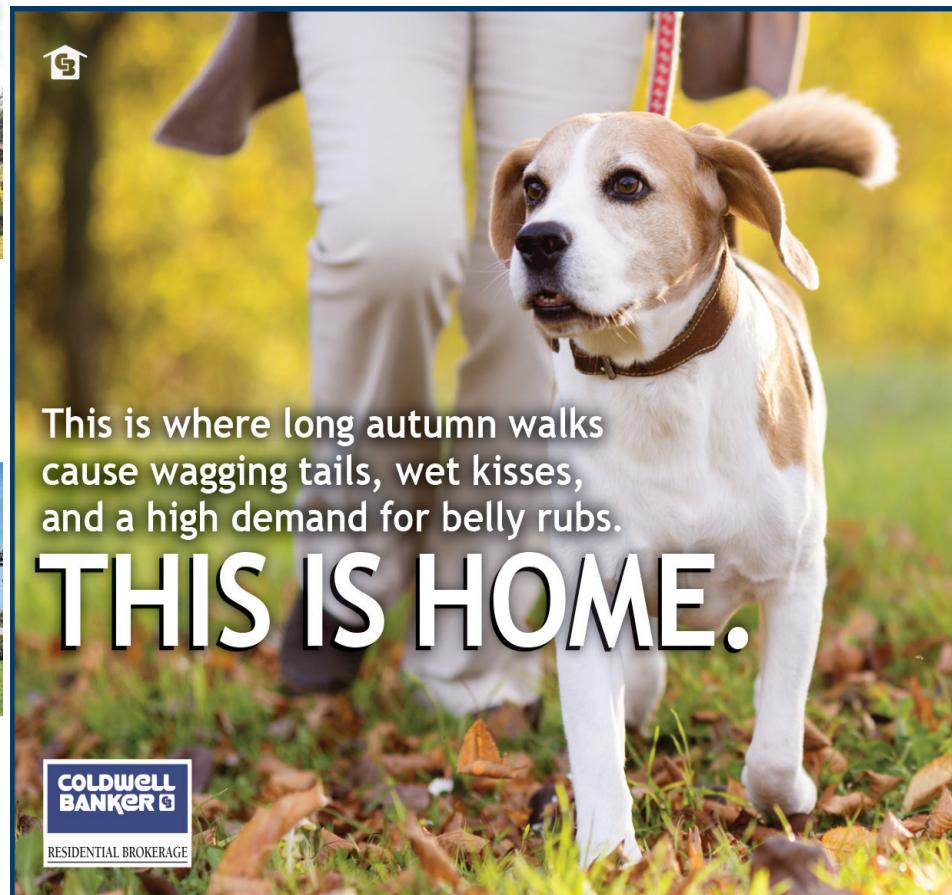
Wethersfield | \$259,900 | 170016474 | 801 Silas Deane Hwy
2061 SF brick Colonial with 3 generously sized bedrooms & 2.5 baths. Fresh paint and new carpet. Spacious kitchen with access to patio. New furnace with 4 zones, A/C. Finished lower level w/ half bath.

SaraFelter.net | 860-573-8008



Wethersfield | \$254,900 | 170021636 | 866 Ridge Road
Charming 3BD/2BA Cape Cod, each room is a perfect delight! The comfortable front to back LR features a wood fireplace. 3-season porch & 29' deck overlook private level backyard. Hardwood, Gas, A/C.

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Wethersfield | \$239,900 | 170019430 | 404 Ridge Road
Solid brick 3BD Ranch w attached 2 car garage. Natural light, fire place, built-ins. Hardwood floors, updated mechanicals. Semi-finished walk-out LL has windows along the back of the house & a 2nd fp.

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Wethersfield | \$179,900 | 170022456 | 745 Silas Deane Hwy
Well built 3BR, 2BA Cape in good condition. 1st floor BR has washer/dryer in closet. 3-season porch, newer roof, furnace & electrical. Patio, detached garage w/loft area for storage, shed.

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Wethersfield | \$237,500 | 170018670 | 467 Brimfield Road
Large rooms and a nice flowing floor plan make this a great 3 BD house for everyday living & entertaining! Hardwood floors, thermo-pane windows, French doors, 6 panel doors, 2 car garage, trex deck.

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Wethersfield | \$177,000 | 170017578 | 82 Harding Street
Delightful Clear Through! Delightful 3 bedroom ranch set on a level lot of quiet street! Features 2 sided fireplace. Enclosed 3 season porch & large patio. 20 x 27 family room in lower level with full bath. Gas, Newer roof.

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Rocky Hill | \$529,900 | 170010366 | 7 Esther Drive
Perfectly appointed 4BR/2.5 BA 2988 sq ft home, set on .92 ac. Open concept w HW; LR w/ high end finishes & 5 ft windows; every window has a view! A kitchen that is straight out of House Beautiful!

Lina D'Angelo | 860-380-7121



Rocky Hill | \$296,500 | 17023495 | 132 Westmeadow Rd.
Move right into this exceptional 3BR raised ranch. Custom dual level deck, private yard backs to farm land. Updated LL w Family room, remodeled bath & fireplace. Updates, Hardwoods, ample closets.

Nic Saraceno | 860-559-1695



Rocky Hill | \$166,500 | 170008648 | 55 Copper Beech Dr.
Stylish & sophisticated townhouse located in the Oaks! Bright & open interior. Features tiled foyer, cathedral ceilings in DR & fireplace in the LR. Serene backyard w shaded patio & trickling stream.

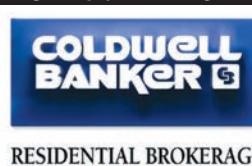
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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"When the opportunity to sponsor K9 Maverick presented itself, we were very happy to be able to help out in such an impactful way." - *Jeffrey Piccolomini*

See story page 34

ON THE COVER

Frank Begen has called many softball and baseball games at Maxwell Park during his decades of working as a professional umpire around Greater Hartford.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
See story page 41

4	Town Council
18	Board of Education
27	News roundup
30	Slice of LIFE
32	A little at a time
35	Chess, anyone?
36	LIFE in the classroom
39	Student of the month
40	Classifieds
41	Living Your Best Life
46	Events spotlight
47	Calendar
51	Letters



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CAMPAIGN 2017

Meet the candidates for Town Council

When voters go to the polls Nov. 7, they will find 15 candidates on the ballot seeking election to the Town Council. Rocky Hill LIFE asked each of them to submit a photo and respond to four questions to help residents cast an informed vote.

They were allowed a maximum of 500 words and editing was limited to style, gram-

mar, punctuation and spelling. The questions are:

- 1) Property taxes are a major issue in town. How would you provide necessary town services with minimum effect on the local tax rate?**
- 2) What should town officials do to attract new businesses to town?**
- 3) Other than the subjects above, what**

do you see as the most important issue facing the town, and what would you do about it?

- 4) Is there any other information you would like to share with voters about your personal or professional qualifications, background, community involvement?**

Here are their responses.

Mukesh Desai Democrat

1. To maintain our competitive advantage of lower mill rate than surrounding towns while providing the necessary town services, Rocky Hill needs to focus on how to grow our business and permanent

residential base. Rocky Hill has a lot of growth potential for both residential and commercial development.

We have a great opportunity to develop our riverfront property amongst other prime locations that would drive business development and traffic

to our town areas. With the new school already in process, we have an opportunity to attract residents to our beautiful town.

Because our tax base is very competitive with surrounding towns, I strongly believe Rocky Hill will be a leading town in the future.

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2. In an effort to attract large and small size businesses to our town, town officials need to capitalize on our existing assets, such as our centralized location. Our quick and easy access to the I-91 corridor is a key factor in attracting businesses and driving traffic to our local businesses.

Second, we should actively engage our residents and have them drive the vision of their town. Once we have good community involvement and a unified vision, town officials need to create attractive incentives that will drive development and investment in our town.

Lastly, we have done a lot of work to clean up our trails and undeveloped parks in town. Today, Quarry Park and Dividend Park have become state-wide attractions. Rocky Hill should promote to businesses that our town supports a high quality of living for its businesses and residents by investing in a clean and healthy environment.

3. I believe investing in our future generations is key to a long-term growth strategy. By building a much-needed school, we are taking a step in the right direction. Also, by investing in our seniors, we are also taking a step in the right direction.

We need to see these projects through and then build a strong base to ensure that these



**Mukesh
Desai**

investments deliver us the result of becoming a thriving community.

4. I own a printing business in town, PBM Printers, which my wife Bella and I have run and operated since 1985. Both Bella and I have been active within our community for many years.

I currently serve as the president of India Association of Central CT. And, most importantly, we are proud grandparents to our beautiful grandson. Spending time with our grandson and our children is the best part of our life.

Bryan Addy Republican

1. The budget process needs to be a collaborative and bipartisan effort that prioritizes town services, separates needs from wants, adequately funds those high-priority needs and sets money aside for future community plans. I will have a balanced approach that is fair, equitable and inclusive to all members of our community.

Through budget workshops and detailed analysis, I will identify any unnecessary spending and look to repurpose those funds towards critical services affected by our growing population and number of new businesses and apartment complexes.

Rocky Hill's local tax rate is going to change as property revaluations will be occurring over the next year. So we need to be attentive to this and make sure we don't raise residential taxes, as any budget increases should be offset by the anticipated growth in Rocky Hill's grand list.

Also, the town needs proactively search for ways to increase alternative revenue sources in lieu of relying heavily upon property taxes and

state aid.

2. Rocky Hill is already an attractive location for businesses with our growing and diverse population as well as our close proximity to Hartford and major highways. As businesses desire to move to our prime location, we should not be so quick to offer tax abatements, but rather look to negotiate terms that include benefits to our community such as funding sidewalk and park improvements.

And as great as it is to be one of the top-growing business communities in our state, it's even more important to make sure that we don't over-develop and lose sight of the small farming community that Rocky Hill once was. We also need to make existing businesses look more attractive through enhanced storefront and façade improvement programs.

And we can help diversify our business portfolio and increase revenues by responsibly developing and marketing one of our best-kept secrets, our vast Connecticut riverfront. Tapping into the tourism industry is viable option that the town needs to explore.

3. Simply put, we need to hire a permanent town manager. Rocky Hill has a \$75 million operating budget and we've been long without a full-time CEO who can run an efficient organization and



**Bryan
Addy**

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create a culture of accountability amongst town employees.

Despite our town charter stating that a permanent town manager shall be hired within 180 days, here we are going on 14 months because our current Town Council cannot work diligently across party lines to come up with a solution that is in the best interest of the town.

Lisa Marotta and our Republican slate of candidates are fresh faces with new ideas and open minds willing and ready to work with everyone involved to resolve this and every issue that comes before us.

4. My wife Marcie and I have two young boys and are excited to be a part of our community. I currently serve on the Public Buildings Commission and the RHIS School Building Committee, but what is most rewarding to me is coaching youth sports. Find out more about me and other candidates on www.teamrockyhill.com.

Michele Collins Unite Rocky Hill

1. Having worked several years for the state of Connecticut before leaving for self-employment, I have a unique perspective on utilization of employees in business as well as government. As with any business, and you have to look at the town operations as a business, employees need to be trained and ready to move to different facets of the town

departments as the need arises.

Parks and Recreation may need additional help in the spring, summer and fall months, when fields need to be maintained and mowing is at its peak. Consolidating and cross-training employees to be able to move where the need demands is important strategy to maintaining control in spending and taxes.

2. There is so much more to Rocky Hill than meets the eye. I think we need to start looking at local business and commerce and need to do a better job of tying it in with the history and culture of our town.

We have connections to the riverfront and a vast history of a port town, we have the ferry, we have great parks, we have a rich agriculture history that continues today, historical significance in archaeological and Native American history; all this needs to be part of a comprehensive plan to attracting new business. A solid campaign for recruiting new business needs to incorporate past,



Michele Collins

present and future in promoting Rocky Hill as an economically viable and up-and-coming area with deep roots and new branches.

3. Overcrowding of schools and a massive influx of business on Route 3 has created severe traffic issues. As we attract new business, we need to be diligent and thoughtful in what these businesses have to offer our town, where the best areas are for location, and try to develop the area and structures already existing commercially, like the Ames property and the vacant buildings along Silas Deane.

We should be minimizing the addition of more residential property and maximizing tax-paying businesses we bring to town. We should be looking at what we need as a town and what suits us, not just who wants to move in. Utilization and revitalization of current space needs to be a priority, not developing much-needed open space.

4. I have degrees in environmental design, landscape construction and agriculture education. I have sat on boards for UConn and UMass, as well as volunteered my time with educational talks at schools throughout the state, at the vegetable growers conferences yearly, and I am a licensed arborist.

I am a mom of two boys in the local school system and I operate Fair Weather Acres. I have worked for the state of Connecticut as well as the

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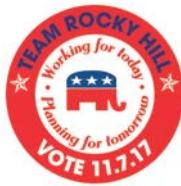


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LISA MAROTTA is a proven community LEADER

- When our community was at risk because of **severe school overcrowding**, **Lisa Stood Up for the Community**. As Chair of Stay Invested, she oversaw the successful passage of the Intermediate School Referendum to relieve the burden of overcrowding for students, teachers, and families, while securing increased STEM education opportunities, and protecting real estate property values for homeowners by eliminating the stigma associated with overcrowded school districts.
- When the Council was gridlocked on how many votes it takes to **hire a Town Manager**, **Lisa Stood Up for Taxpayers**. Lisa helped direct the conversation between residents and local leaders about the importance of adhering to the text and intent of our Town Charter. Lisa will not allow Rocky Hill to flounder any longer without a town CEO. Hiring a full time, designated Town Manager is her first priority to ensure proper stewardship of taxpayer money.
- When our community voiced its frustration about the failure to fund a **senior center**, **Lisa Stood Up for Seniors**. Lisa has spoken countless times about the need for a comprehensive 5 year plan to meet senior needs. She is a strong advocate for creating an inclusive community approach that mirrors the State's initiative to create Livable Communities that promote quality services, supports, and recreational choices for senior residents. She wants Rocky Hill to be a thriving place for people to grow up *and* grow older.
- When the Council failed to properly fund the **town budget**, **Lisa Stood Up for Taxpayers**. Lisa has made her disapproval of the town's adopted budget, as well as, its budget process well known. Lisa advocated for putting money aside to protect against the risk of anticipated expenses and State shortfalls. She advocated for coming up with alternative funding sources in lieu of relying on money that is not available. Lisa knows that prudent towns operate under written, comprehensive capital improvement plans. She will take the unprecedented step to plan, prioritize and justify projects in a transparent way that will benefit residents and Council members alike.
- When the State promised **cuts to municipal funding**, **Lisa Stood Up for Children, Families and Residents on a Fixed Income**. Lisa contacted State lawmakers over the summer and urged them to do more to protect our children, families and residents on a fixed income. She has been the only outspoken candidate on this matter to publically voice her displeasure with promised State cuts, and the only one who will work hard to protect taxpayers.

Lisa's courage to advocate for change, put aside party affiliation, and offer an agenda committed to fiscal responsibility, decreased spending and balanced taxes has earned her the Endorsement of both the Rocky Hill Republican Party, as well as, the Independent Party of Connecticut.

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private sector. My vast range of employment has allowed me to work in different areas from education, to commercial agriculture, to parks and landscape management, and city planning of parks and green space.

This gives me a unique perspective on business operations as well as experience in working to meet the needs of a diverse population.

Christopher Duff Democrat

1. We need to work with the public to ensure that Rocky Hill continues to offer high-value services that are widely used. We must develop responsible budgets in an open and inclusive process that properly funds critical services without gimmicks or kicking the can down the road. We must continue to pursue development opportunities that positively contribute to the fabric of our town.

2. The town must be proactive about engaging with potential developers, state agencies and involved third parties to highlight and eliminate obstacles to on-time and on-budget project completions. We must create and maintain a business climate and permitting process that is easily understood and efficient.

The town's economic development office should have sufficient resources to effectively position Rocky Hill within the current market while also conducting forward-thinking research on

upcoming economic trends to make sure we do not fall behind in a competitive global economy.

We must also be decisive about acquiring open space to preserve the character of our town for future generations. The best advertising a town can have is residents who love to live here; we need to make sure Rocky Hill continues to be a place where people want to raise their families and invite their friends to town.

3. The council needs to formalize the appointment of a permanent town manager. The town needs to demonstrate progress toward improving resources for seniors which are expected to be a growing part of the population in the years to come.

This is not an issue for a specific generation, anyone who has had to care for an aging parent or grandparent knows how difficult it can be to do that from out of town. And kids today will be seniors before they know it.

An integrated community center that offers services across the aging spectrum would be a



Christopher Duff

huge benefit to our community. In the near term, we also need to do what we can to improve the programs available at the existing senior center.

4. I am a firm believer that a rising tide lifts all boats and that we are better working together toward a shared goal than against each other to achieve separate agendas. As an environmentalist and president of a local nonprofit land trust, I know the importance of being a good steward of the land and protecting the character of our town for future generations.

As someone with a working-class background and the child of a single parent, I understand the duty that comes with being a good steward of our neighbors' tax dollars and protecting those on tight budgets. With a research-based and business-oriented professional background, along with an open mind and a desire to learn, I believe that I can serve our town well should the voters of Rocky Hill entrust me with that duty.

Edward Charamut Republican

1. Look, these taxes are a function of appraised values and mill rates set by the council to accommodate the town's cost of doing business, which is paying salaries and providing services to town residents and businesses.

We must review carefully each and every year what our costs are, but better still we must fore-

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cast what the town's operating budget will be three, four or five years out so that we can adequately match tax revenues to expenditures without costly surprises or unplanned-for purchases which can be mitigated.

2. Business owners are planners, so to attract and or keep businesses in Rocky Hill we must provide them with an open and honest town development plan and budget process.

Business owners like to say they need visibility, not better eyesight, but they need to see down the road three, four or five years what their taxes might be and where the town is growing and going.

3. The town of Rocky Hill needs a five-year operating plan. Our proposed Republican slate from the mayor on down through the Town Council candidates all agree that we need to immediately begin a process to establish a five-year town operating plan.



Edward Charamut

4. Involvement in our community can't be overlooked as an effective attribute for any resident to run for town-wide office. I serve on the town's Open Space and Conservation Commission, Insurance Committee and Rocky Hill Band Backers Association. I have served on numerous non-for-profit boards as well as chaired.

I can honestly say that I have always gotten more back from the process of serving than what it may have cost me to participate in time and resources.

Ralph "Larry" Lindenberger Unite Rocky Hill

1. The residents and businesses of Rocky Hill have become accustomed to excellent services provided by the town departments, both volunteer and career. The costs of providing these services will always continue to climb, just as our own personal expenses do.

To address these challenges, first and foremost we need to have the very best department managers working with the town leaders. The department managers need to have the experience and capability to maximize the benefits of the staff's experience.

So the newly elected Town Council's first task should be to hire a permanent town manager. I also believe we should investigate the possibility of pooling resources with surrounding communities

to maximize our services to the residents with minimal financial obligations.

The town should also investigate additional sources of revenue not related to property taxes.

2. I would expand the question to ask, "How do we attract the right businesses to town?" We need more companies, large or small, that are compatible with the desired community settings that have attracted people to reside in Rocky Hill in the first place.

I do not believe that the residents want industry which will continue to overwhelm the transportation infrastructure and burden the town services that have already reached maximum capabilities. Rocky Hill has a very favorable central location and should be attractive to technology and financial types of business which have less negative impact on the residents' quality of life.

Our economic developer should not be pressured by town policies to provide tax revenues at any costs. He should use his ability to promote



Ralph "Larry" Lindenberger



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Rocky Hill's desirable location and available land use. The right business in the right location sums it up.

3. I believe that partisan politics have impeded the progress of Rocky Hill by delaying important decisions including the hiring of a new town manager. As the only independent (unaffiliated) candidate campaigning for Town Council, I would have the unique ability to make my decisions based on what I think is best for the town residents without succumbing to party pressures.

Reluctance to compromise leads to poor leadership.

4. I became involved with community service after moving to Rocky Hill from Maryland 30 years ago. I immediately joined the Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Department and retired as a deputy chief with 26 years of service.

I have approximately eight years of experience serving on the Planning and Zoning and Open Space and Conservation (Wetlands) commissions. I'm currently a member of the Farmland Acquisition and Preservation Committee.

In 2004, several neighbors and I formed an organization called "Save Open Space" (SOS). We rallied the town residents to overwhelmingly vote to set aside town-owned land surrounding Dividend Ponds as permanent open space.

Through the hard work of zealous residents and local Boy Scouts to construct hiking trails, this has now become the popular Dividend Park and is enjoyed by many residents year-round.

John Emmanuel Democrat

1. Rocky Hill continues to have a low mill rate compared to other towns in Hartford County. Over the past two fiscal years we have maintained our high credit rating while funding important capital improvement projects along with the necessary town services that residents expect.

We can see over the next five years what expenses may impact the budget and prepare for them.

We also need to look at future investment in projects that will ultimately save money for taxpayers such as installing solar panels at community buildings to decrease utility expenses, moving towards electric vehicles and studies in consolidating some services with neighboring towns

2. We should continue to promote our low tax rate; the available infrastructure for the company's use will lead to greater attraction. We have the criteria in place with town services, a major interstate highway and strong public safety departments.

But we also need to be smart in what type of businesses we want to attract. This can be done through stricter planning and zoning requirements limiting certain types of development.

3. A new community/senior center. Over the past 18 months we have made great strides in researching the requirements needed for the senior center expansion. This project involves obtaining resident and town staff feedback and opinions.

The Town Council also hired a nationally recognized senior center consultant to do a thorough study of our current center. This was done through several public meetings and forums, staff consulting and a comprehensive survey mailed to residents 55 and over.

Although the Republican minority members opposed this effort, the survey and study was a success and the town manager is now working on requirements with town staff and potential architectural firms.

Tax rate. Rocky Hill enjoys a low tax rate compared to many other Hartford County communities. I will continue to monitor expendi-



John Emmanuel
Democrat

tures, as I have by serving on the Finance Committee, so that we are planning diligently and saving accordingly.

Open space conservation. I have strongly supported every initiative to purchase open space outright or the development rights. We should be as assertive as Glastonbury in preserving open space in order to maintain our diverse and rural character.

4. I have served on the Town Council since November 2015. I have seen obstructive politics interfere with town progress and this needs to stop.

Residents need to see that partisan politics does not work (as I have witnessed by the Republican minority members) and the common goal and critical need is for the Town Council to put residents first and make decisions that are in the best interest of the town.

I am a strong proponent of public safety and have volunteered in both the fire department and ambulance association and spent 15 years as a Rocky Hill police dispatcher.

I have obtained two graduate degrees in business, one MBA from Nichols College and one MBS from University College, Dublin, Ireland. This helped my business career at Aetna Insurance working with IT and business solutions to regulatory requirements and also my current involvement in commercial property management.

Allan Greenspan Republican

1. Taxes are a concern; the uncertainty with our current state budget situation has led to greater uncertainty at the local level. Rocky Hill needs to develop a long-range plan to aid in controlling our budget while continuing to offer the services needed by residents.

Our model cannot be tax and spend, but we need to have outside-the-box thinking to control costs and budget accordingly. We will also look at

alternative sources of revenue outside of property tax.

2. Rocky Hill needs to work on targeted growth, bringing in the type of development that will benefit the town and other local businesses while limiting the impact on the local infrastructure. There is a balance that needs to take place between development and maintaining open space, as noted in the Plan of Conversation and Development.

3. The first task is working to hire a town manager. The current mayor and Town Council have been ineffective in the selection and hiring process and Rocky Hill has been without a full-time manager for over a year.

Leadership starts at the top and we need to bring in a strong and motivated town manager to work with the Town Council and mayor to lead the town forward. Once this role is filled we can start the process of developing a five-year plan, looking to move existing stalled projects forward as well as plan for our current and future needs.

4. I moved to Rocky Hill in 2000 with wife Pamela and two young daughters Sydney and Jessica. I quickly became involved with coaching youth sports. After a few years I joined the Rocky Hill Little League Board and I am still an active board member, even after my youngest aged out over six years ago.

I have also served on various town committees including Economic Development and I am presently on the Planning and Implementation Committee for the 2015 Plan of Conversation and Development, as well as chair of the Parks and



**Allan
Greenspan**

Recreation Advisory Board.

Professionally, I started my career in public accounting and earned my CPA license before leaving to start a career in a family business. As a small business owner with a financial background, I am used to working on day-to-day issues while not losing focus of the big, long-term picture.

I wear many hats in my professional career and it has provided me experience in many different areas. I believe those skills will transfer well to making sound decisions on behalf of Rocky Hill.

Frank Szeps Unite Rocky Hill

1. I will start off by saying that I will not raise property taxes. My budget priorities are police, fire, education and the town's infrastructure. I will work very closely with the new town manager to establish these priorities.

A close look at all the services we provide must be scrutinized to determine whether to reduce, eliminate or charge for them.

Consideration must also be given to privatizing or outsourcing services.

Our state government is determined to raise taxes another record amount and reduce the amount of reimbursements to towns. Rocky Hill must develop budgets based on the current mill rate and annual grand list growth. **2.** Rocky Hill has been fortunate with business development. Our business community is expanding. We are now performing a balancing act with business expansion and increased traffic.



**Frank
Szeps**

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Town officials must continue to support the efforts put forward by the economic development director and the various committees charged with these responsibilities, at the same time honoring the town's Plan of Conservation Development.

3. The most important issue facing the new council is to hire a highly qualified town manager. I cannot express enough how important this is. Rocky Hill will experience a higher than normal town staff turnover soon. Preparations must begin now for this change.

Rocky Hill must have in place the leadership ready to rebuild those vacancies with the possibility of and potential for restructuring. The next CEO of Rocky Hill will have the difficult task of building budgets with no tax increases. I commit to work with all councilors for the benefit of the town and not political party to accomplish this.

4. A little about my commitment to serving Rocky Hill: 13-year member Open Space and Conservation Commission, six years as chairman; 10-year member Rocky Hill Board of Education, six years as chairman; 10-year member Capital Region Education Council (CREC), president, vice president; 14-year member Rocky Hill Town Council, past deputy mayor; Rocky Hill Youth soccer coach; past member Rocky Hill Elks, 37 years; past member Rocky Hill Lions, 10 years.

Joseph Kochanek Jr. Democrat

1. Although Rocky Hill's property tax increased by a half a mill rate this year, that increase enabled the town to replace fire apparatus, upgrade our dispatch emergency and fire department radio systems to support the increasing growth of our community.

We were able to purchase property development rights which will enable us to preserve farm land and river front property for future generations to enjoy. Our town's roads are being redone, we have taken action to provide the much-needed senior activity center and the building of a new middle school is underway.

2. New businesses continue to grow in Rocky Hill, including medical facilities that are planned on Corporate Ridge, restaurants, ice cream shops and new a new hotel on Route 3, while well-known



**Joseph
Kochanek Jr.**

longstanding businesses remain and are supported by our town's close community.

Rocky Hill continues to be a very desirable town for new businesses due to our location within the state and a sought-after town to reside in for our community mindset and our highly rated school system.

4. I was born in Hartford, moving to Wethersfield at a young age and graduated from high school. I joined the U.S. Navy after high school and served four years, including time on the USS Kennedy DD850 as a radar man second class.

After my service in the Navy, I started working for Southern New England Telephone (SNET), holding numerous positions throughout my tenure of 38 years, starting as a repairman and concluding as a construction supervisor when I retired in 2005.

I am married 50 years to my high school sweetheart, Jan. We bought our first house in 1967 in Rocky Hill and still reside in the same house today. We raised four daughters in town and are now are blessed with 14 grandchildren. Three of our four daughters still live in Rocky Hill with their families.

I was a member of the Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Department for 37 years and held the position of fire chief for 11 years upon retiring in 2007.

I also served as vice president of the Rocky

ROCKY HILL DEMOCRATS

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VOTE ROW A • ROCKY HILL TOGETHER

Paid for by the Rocky Hill Democratic Town Committee, Doris Vieira Treasurer, and Claudia Baio for Mayor 2017, Chris Duff, Treasurer. Julia Eisenhaur, Deputy Treasurer. Approved by Claudia Baio and all candidates.

Hill Historical Society for many years, collaborated with the town for a new air conditioning and heating system and also the installation of a handicap ramp and facility, ensuring everyone can enjoy and learn the great history of our town.

Along with the history of our town, I also worked with town officials to preserve the original town fire station located on Church Street that is now known as the Rocky Hill Fire Museum. It is part of the annual fourth grade historical tour of our town's history.

Andrew Lanciotto Republican

1. Everyone is concerned about taxes. Rocky Hill needs a long-term financial plan so we can have a head start on our budgetary process year by year. First we need to hire a town manager to get him or her on board with our plan.

Then we will be able to take a look at our town services and determine the town needs and ensure our needs are met. We must make sure we are controlling what we spend so we do not have to rely on taxes down the road.

2. We need to make Rocky Hill is a place where businesses have little concern but unlimited opportunity. We have a riverfront that many towns do not have and we can develop along this area to provide a unique opportunity for

businesses.

However, we have to keep in mind preservation of some of this land is also important, over-development is not what we want. We need to make sure businesses know the Rocky Hill officials have their backs and want them to feel comfortable doing business here in our town.

3. I already touched on the importance of our long-term financial plan and the hiring of our town manager, but a separate issue that needs to be taken care of is the community environment of Rocky Hill. We need to start making Rocky Hill a more family friendly environment.

We have a great school system in Rocky Hill, many lifelong residents and many new residents. Rocky Hill used to have more family events around town like the old fishing derby, festivals in the park, and many fun opportunities for families in town.



**Andrew
Lanciotto**

I want to restore this environment to Rocky Hill so we can be a town everyone wants to raise their families in.

4. As for myself, I am a lifelong resident of Rocky Hill. I have been through the Rocky Hill school system starting with preschool Rocky Hill Congregational Church, through Stevens Elementary School, to Griswold Middle School, and finished up at Rocky Hill High School. I chose to continue my education at Central Connecticut State University so I could stay close to my family while receiving a degree in finance.

There I was elected as vice president of College Republicans and referred to the Connecticut Federation of College Republicans, where I was elected to become the state political director for the organization.

All while back in Rocky Hill I volunteered at Atria Senior Living, where my great-grandmother lived for a few years, Maple View Rehabilitation Center, and parks and recreation, where I coached youth basketball and supervised for five years.

I became a town committee member at the age of 18 and I decided it was time for me to get further involved in our town politics. Rocky Hill is the place I plan on raising my family and this plays a large part in why I want to be so heavily involved around town.



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- Passed responsible budgets with just a 0.6 mil difference in 2017
- Restored transparency to the budget process
- Formed the bipartisan Intermediate School Building Committee in cooperation with the BOE
- Championed the cause of the "Stranded towns" to save Rocky Hill's solar project bringing about \$90,000 annually and projected cost savings through green energy initiatives
- Preserved open space, increased access to the river

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Paid for by Claudia Baio for Mayor 2017, Chris Duff, Treasurer, Julia Eisenhauer, Deputy Treasurer. Approved by Claudia Baio.

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Cindy Tagney Unite Rocky Hill

1. I would work within the existing budget and look for ways to consolidate spending, eliminate waste and trim the overall budget where possible.

2. Town officials should do everything possible to attract new business, including using existing economic development plans and working with the local chamber of commerce to develop fresh ideas for attracting businesses.

3. Rocky Hill is a great place to live. The most important issue in town is responsible growth

and development while revitalizing some of the existing areas. I intend to study current planning and advocate for development that will provide both revenue and long-term benefits to our town.

4. Being a lifetime resident and having many years



Cindy Tagney

in state service help me bring a unique background to the council. I have developed skills in emergency management, planning and collaboration across organizations that could allow me to make a valuable contribution to town government.

I am grateful to be considered for a seat on the Rocky Hill Town Council and thank the voters for their consideration.

William O'Sullivan Democrat

1. Under Mayor Baio, we have done a very good job on the expense side and we have seen steady growth of our grand list. We need to continue building our tax base by encouraging economic development that does not put an undue strain on town resources and services.

2. Commuter rail from New Haven to Hartford, and on to Springfield, is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2018. I think this will bring a lot of favorable attention to the I-91 corridor as a place to live and work and provides an excellent opportunity for Rocky Hill.

Our proximity to I-91, Bradley International Airport, and soon the railroad gives us a competitive advantage that we should market aggressively.

3. We need to build on the great progress we have

made toward a new community center that will serve the needs of our growing senior population.

We have completed a detailed needs assessment and are now in the process of identifying an architect.

4. I am a partner in a five-attorney law firm and my practice is focused on business litigation. My legal training is useful in connection with many issues that come before the Town Council, such as evaluating new and revised town ordinances, town contracts and town litigation.

I have a leadership position in the Connecticut Bar Association and serve on the Statewide Grievance Committee. In town, before serving on the Town Council, I served on the Economic Development Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission. I sing in the choir at St. James church, where my wife, Joy, is the director of music.



William O'Sullivan

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Jeffrey Levine Republican

1. Ensuring our departments operate as efficiently as possible and eliminating waste is critical. The first step in accomplishing this is to hire a strong town manager – something our current council has been woefully lax in completing.

Things fall through the cracks without proper leadership. This must be the highest priority for the next mayor and Town Council to tackle on a bipartisan basis.

2. Surrounding towns are trying to attract new businesses just as Rocky Hill is. We need to start thinking outside the box.

Building strip malls so existing town tenants just move to the new building and leave the old space vacant is not an overall solution.

New businesses should not only help our tax base, but also provide needed products or services to our residents. Tax incentives must be well thought out and used judiciously to ensure an ultimate positive outcome to Rocky Hill.

3. Our team's motto "Working for Today, Planning for Tomorrow" sums this up best. Our town government seems to have a history of being reactive instead of proactive when it comes to planning for the replacement of important town assets (town pool, heavy duty equipment, vehicles, etc.).

Setting funds aside over time would allow the town to be better prepared for required large expenditures without creating a huge setback for the town budgets.

Startlingly, Rocky Hill has one of the lowest cash reserves amongst reporting towns in the state and they are expected to decrease further. A more significant cash reserve is vital when unexpected financial issues occur. We will work to institute a five-year plan in order to use the town's limited financial resources more efficiently and effectively.

The growth of apartments has led to a stress of some of the town's infrastructure, including



**Jeffrey
Levine**

schools. We need to work better to absorb such growth as well as a better plan for future expansion in town.

We need to be less political and more of a bipartisan team with the ultimate goal of benefiting Rocky Hill. My years on the Parks and Recreation Advisory board worked just in that fashion – you could not determine anyone's political party affiliation. I think that can be carried over to the council level.

4. My family has lived in Rocky Hill since 1995. Our children's entire schooling was in town and my wife works as a paraprofessional at Griswold Middle School.

As someone with a strong 27-plus year business background with CPA and CFA designations, I will bring a much-needed perspective to the council, especially in light of recent funding lapses from the state.

I have enjoyed several volunteering opportunities including serving on the Little League Board for eight years, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for four years, RHHS Baseball Booster Club for two years and 28 years with the Travelers Championship, the last three as a member of their Executive Committee.

I believe my combination of experiences and service with the town will enable me to an asset to the council and my fellow residents.

Catherine Vargas Unite Rocky Hill

1. I have and will continue to take an in-depth look at and to understand where your tax dollars are being spent and to make recommendations as to how to provide the services that Rocky Hill needs to be a thriving and vibrant community in the most cost-effective manner.

We need to work with the new town manager to continue to look at efficiencies in how services are offered and how business is conducted – explore ways that we can reduce costs by not only combining efforts with the Board of Education, combined health insurance, but with surrounding towns.

There should be an open dialogue between the full council and the town manager as to alternate funding avenues, alternate ways of doing business and providing services – mileage reimbursement for use of personal vehicles for town business vs. the purchase of new town vehicles.

2. Open and ongoing communication between the town and the Rocky Hill business community,

continue to work with the chamber of commerce and to control town spending. Maintaining a stable mill rate not only impacts our residents, but the businesses in town as well.

I support smart growth, expanding the commercial tax base while retaining the charm of Rocky Hill and in maintaining and protecting open space.

3. I see three important issues facing Rocky Hill in the next two years: an immediate need is the hiring of a town manager; to develop budgets with little to no tax increases; to address the increasing needs of our growing senior population

Develop a long-term comprehensive strategy for Rocky Hill and to keep that strategy in sight during the annual budget process. During the past three years, a couple of extensive reviews of services offered to seniors, space used by seniors and the shortage of affordable housing for seniors were completed. This information will serve as our plan going forward.

4. I bring to the council the desire and passion to do what is right for the taxpayer/resident of Rocky Hill. I believe in open and honest communication, common sense leadership and I know I have and will continue to make a difference.

In addition to my desire and passion, I bring 18 years of municipal budget experience, 10 years on the Board of Education and eight years as a town councilor, and over 30 years of financial work experience.

I have actively volunteered my time and talents to a variety of organizations within town, for the Chrysalis Center and for my church in Hartford. My husband Dave and I have lived in Rocky Hill for over 30 years. We have two children who went through and graduated from the Rocky Hill school system and we are new grandparents – a grandson named Carter.

Unite Rocky Hill is the perfect mix of experience and fresh ideas and is committed to doing what is right for the residents of Rocky Hill. **RHL**



**Catherine
Vargas**



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CAMPAIGN 2017

Meet the candidates for Board of Education

When voters go to the polls Nov. 7, they will find 10 candidates on the ballot seeking election to the Board of Education.

Rocky Hill LIFE asked each of them to submit a photo and respond to four questions to help residents cast an informed vote.

They were allowed a maximum of 500

words and editing was limited to style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. The questions are:

1) How would you provide necessary education services while also trying to control expenses?

2) What are the most important education issues facing the town, and what would you do about them?

3) What changes in policy do you think are needed to improve the quality of a local public education?

4) Is there any other information you would like to share with voters about your personal or professional qualifications, background, community involvement?

Here are their responses.

Laurie Boske Democrat

1. The Board of Education receives a monthly report on the district's expenses prior to every board meeting. As a full board, we discuss current and anticipated expenses.

One example of controlling expenses is in the area of student textbooks. We look to purchase multiple-year contracts that are cost effective and seek to purchase digital textbooks that are updated regularly and more cost effective than the traditional hard-cover textbook. Our Chromebook initiative has allowed us to employ digital materials for our students.

2. The most important educational issue facing Rocky Hill is the continuing increase in student enrollment in the elementary schools. We are excited to begin construction on our new intermediate school, but we have classrooms today that are reaching, and at times, exceeding our class size guidelines. We have purchased portable classrooms to meet this need.

In addition, we have two grade five classes at Griswold Middle to lessen the overcrowding at West Hill and Stevens schools. Another educational initiative is ensuring that our instructors are well versed in the Next Generation Science Standards. Our teachers are being trained in not only science content, but also in the inquiry method of instruction.

Rocky Hill students continue to perform at the top of our educational reference group on state assessments. It's an exciting time to be a student and an educator in Rocky Hill.

3. As the current chairperson of the Policy Committee, I believe that Rocky Hill has successfully addressed recent policy initiatives from the state. We recently adopted a new policy program that incorporates periodic updates for all policies, especially in the areas of school climate, school safety, health care needs and bullying.

Any new legislative updates in school policy are sent to the district for review and adoption by the board if required. The Policy Committee continues to review all school policies on a regular basis and revises them based upon the specific needs of our town.

4. I have been an educator for 37 years and recently retired as the principal of Brownstone Intermediate School in Portland, a 2011 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and a 2016 School of Distinction. I am passionate about education and am happy to be able to serve the town of Rocky Hill as a current member of the Board of Education.

I have been a resident of Rocky Hill for the past 23 years. My son graduated from the Rocky Hill schools and is currently an EMT and a volunteer for the Rocky Hill Ambulance service. I am



**Laurie
Boske**

pursuing a new retirement career as a local Realtor.

I believe in giving back to the community and have volunteered in the past for the Rocky Hill Boy Scouts Troop 244 and Catales rescue in Middletown. I currently volunteer in the medical department at the Connecticut Humane Society in Newington.

In fact, four of my five dogs were rescues from the Newington shelter. I also maintain a Little Free Library on my property that provides free books for children and adults.

Jennifer Simboski Allison Republican

1. Over the past few years, the Board of Education has worked hard to be proactive in evaluating the needs of the district from a facilities, technological and curriculum-based standpoint. We have implemented and utilize a capital improvement plan which proactively plans for the future, thereby attempting to eliminate large referendums to our taxpayers.

Appropriate planning is essential. I would continue to work across party lines to implement a budget that maintains exceptional education to our district's students while remaining fiscally prudent to our taxpayers. This can only be accomplished by evaluating the actual needs of the district.

2. One of the most pressing issues is overseeing the construction of our new intermediate school to ensure the project is on time, on budget and appropriately serves the children district-wide in grades 4-5. We must assess our curriculum

through all grades K-12 to ensure that we are meeting the students' needs to stay competitive in the global market.

With the introduction of the new intermediate school, we need to further develop and expand our STEM curriculum in the lower grades and create a new world language curriculum for children at the primary level. We must also continue with the many capital improvements (structural and technological) that have been implemented over the past several years in the schools.

We have seen major improvements and we must be forward minded to identify and prioritize future capital improvement needs while continuing to set money aside yearly to accomplish these improvements.

3. A local public education system is no place for party politics. It is essential for members of an elected board to set aside any and all political differences and simply always vote for what is in the best interest of the school district as a whole.



Jennifer Simboski Allison

Further, planning for the future is essential to ensure a proper balance between providing exceptional educational services while remaining fiscally prudent to our taxpayers.

4. I have been a resident of Rocky Hill for the past 13 years with my husband Matt and my two sons Ben, 11, and Nick, 7. As a mother, I have a vested interest in the education system in our town and the quality of education the district provides.

I am a licensed attorney, having received my juris doctorate degree from Quinnipiac University School of Law in 2000. I spent the past seven years as a stay-at-home mother to foster the growth, development and happiness of my two children. During that sabbatical, I felt it was important to give back to my community by serving in public office on the Board of Education for the past 4 years and have served as chair of both the finance and personnel & negotiations committees during that time.

I recently returned to my former position as a commercial litigator this fall. I am a member of the West Hill Elementary PTO and was a core member of the Stay Accredited organization which helped pass the RHHS referendum in 2012.

Barry Goldberg Democrat

1. Temporary classrooms installed at Stevens School and West Hill School are a temporary fix,

not a permanent solution. The completion of the new intermediate school in 2019 will help resolve this issue and realize long-term savings with the release of the leased class rooms.

Supporting Ron Lamontagne, our facilities director, with utilizing our outstanding in-house staff with repairs, renovations, and

maintaining our facilities such as painting, refurbishing gym floors, installing carpet is helping to control our expenses. Serving on the Board of Education facilities subcommittee is an important responsibility with controlling expenses.

I bring to this subcommittee my experience as an executive regional construction director involved with construction projects throughout the United States. Concerns with details, good communications, constant reviews, and using best construction practices are some of the approaches to achieve a project done on time and on budget, regardless of the size.

2. The growth of our school population and main-



Barry Goldberg

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"I was very happy with the service and with the office staff."

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taining the Board of Education effective class size is a major issue for me. It is very important that every child receives the demanding instructions and help they need to become productive citizens.

With dealing with the present state budget crisis, it is very important that we have a very strong working relationship with our state representatives, council and mayor. Mayor Baio has demonstrated with her actions and help of the council to keep advocating for and maintaining the outstanding schools we have in our town.

3. Serving on the Board of Education, we continue to review our policies to improve the education system. During the past couple of years we have strived to enhance and improve the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to the academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in our school system,

4. I have given back to our community for over 40 years serving on the Zoning Board of Appeals, Wetlands and Conservation Commission, and chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Serving on the Intermediate School Committee will ensure the new school will be built on time and within the budget.

During the next term, the Board of Education will continue to make decisions regarding curricu-

lum to ensure our continued academic successes. Listening to the residents is very important to me.

I appreciate the opportunity to let me assist in the education of our most precious resources, our children. I welcome the opportunity to continue supporting our outstanding teachers, administrators, support staff and fellow Board of Education members.

Dilip Desai Republican

1. I feel that the Board of Education has worked as a whole to keep costs low while providing a quality education for our children. I will continue to work with the BOE and Town Council to focus on high achievement with controlled costs.

2. I see that Rocky Hill is centrally located in Hartford district. Many people have chosen to make their residence here for easy commute. As a result of that, our schools are becoming more and more crowded. As a board we try to keep our classroom numbers at a reasonable level. But as the numbers increase, we are running out of room and need more space.

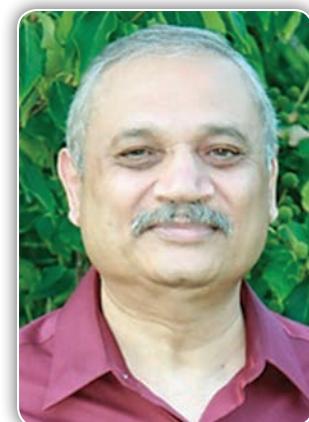
I will work to find short and long-term solutions to this problem. I also believe we have to have our students ready for the technology that is

being used in the business world. I will continue to work towards keeping our computers (technology) and curriculum up to pace with the changes that are happening.

3. I think that we should continue to focus on math and science and make sure all students take enough credits in these areas. Students need to be well rounded, but science and math should be a priority, seriously.

4. I continue to be an active member of the community through my work with the Board of Education and the Indian community including the Middletown and Newington temples.

I also volunteer my time to some nonprofit organizations in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. My daughters received quality education with honors here in Rocky Hill and I want to ensure that all current and future children get the same opportunities that they had.



**Dilip
Desai**

LISA MAROTTA REPUBLICAN for MAYOR

Prudent Management

Unbiased Leadership



VOTE LINE 2

A vote for Lisa Marotta is a vote for:

- **Transparency in Local Government**
- **Responsible Growth and Protection of our Infrastructure**
- **Comprehensive 5 Year Plan**
- **Strong Schools Preparing Students for the Future**
- **Advancing Senior Agendas**
- **Developing a Commission on People with Disabilities**
- **Developing a Farm Advisory Committee**

Paid for by Rocky Hill Republican Town Committee, Mike Casasanta Treasurer

Maria Mannella Democrat

1. We can provide necessary education services while trying to control expenses by seeking out and applying for more federal and state-funded grants. An example would be the security grant Rocky Hill was awarded a few years ago to move our facilities within our school system to a safer environment.

Another grant that was researched out was for improving our technology infrastructure which will in turn help our students to be competitive in this computer age.

Our district has also been fiscally responsible with staff placement once positions are available through retirement. Thinking out of the box has helped our district move forward with necessary education services.

2. The most important education issues facing the town are the limited classroom space in our facilities. Although we added a few more portable classrooms to accommodate the high number of students enrolled, there are still space issues in our elementary schools.

We are thankful for the citizens of Rocky Hill passing a referendum for the intermediate school, but in the meantime our number of students enrolling in our district continues to increase. Our

goal on the BOE is to keep class sizes within a reasonable range.

Our district has done a fantastic job keeping within those standards by adjusting the number of classes depending on grade size. Also, making sure a sustainable capital improvement plan is in place for the continued upkeep of our aging schools.

3. Since Rocky Hill has piloted one-to-one technology devices for seventh- and eighth-graders, I would like a policy drafted and posted on the Rocky Hill Public Schools website addressing one-to-one technology devices for all students and parents to review and understand where our district stands on this policy.

4. My husband Mike and I have made Rocky Hill our home since 1997. We have three boys whom currently attend the Rocky Hill school system. I am an MBA graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and am currently a program manager for



**Maria
Mannella**

an audit and compliance unit.

I have been a member of the Board of Education since 2008. Previously, I was chairwoman of the Finance Committee and a member of the facilities, personnel and negotiations committees. Although I am not a formal member of the curriculum and facilities subcommittees, I try to stay involved by attending as many meetings for up-to-date information working towards the district goals.

My goal as a BOE member is to further advance the education of the children in Rocky Hill so that they are ready to compete in a global society. I feel that this can be done in a fiscally responsible way.

I appreciate listening to and answering parents' questions and concerns regarding the Rocky Hill school system. I would like to thank the citizens of Rocky Hill for giving me the honor to serve these past nine years and hope my constituents allow me to serve again.

Brian Dillon Republican

1. As an elected member of the Board of Education for the past eight years, I have consistently advocated for the budgeting of a fundamentally strong education system that is equivalent to our sur-

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LISA MAROTTA FOR MAYOR



Lisa Marotta

Town Council



Bryan Addy



Ed Charamut



Allan Greenspan



Andrew Lanciotto



Jeff Levine

Board of Education



Jennifer Allison



Dilip Desai



Brian Dillon



Kim Kehoe



Frank Morse

Paid for by Rocky Hill Republican Town Committee, Mike Casasanta Treasurer

rounding communities in program offerings, student opportunities and scholastic achievement. I have demonstrated a consistent commitment to prioritize budget expenses as well as appropriately plan future budgets and programs in a manner that is cost effective and fiscally responsible.

Prime examples of this approach include the development of a capital improvement plan to identify immediate facility concerns such as life safety and ADA improvements on an annual basis, as well as the phased roll-out of the student Chromebook initiative within the district.

As board members, we recently endorsed new plans for the phased development of new science labs and the installation of air conditioning at GMS. These projects are being implemented on a phased approach to control the annual expenses and minimize the impact to the taxpayers.

2. The most important education issues continue



**Brian
Dillon**

to be the implementation of the Common Core Standards and associated push towards STEM and world language requirements. The second issue is the continued overcrowding and space constraints within our elementary schools.

I am very appreciative and thankful to the residents for approving the intermediate school referendum this past year. The completion of this project will alleviate overcrowding at the elementary schools, keep Rocky Hill's educational programs on pace with surrounding communities and eliminate the need for annual leasing expenses required for modular classroom units.

I will continue to advocate for the completed construction project within budget and on schedule. Once completed, the board and administration will work together to ensure that the new intermediate school is focused and aligned with the recently renovated RHHS and an improved GMS.

3. The review of potential policy changes to allow more flexibility in graduation requirements to allow students the option to focus their high school education program on more specific post-graduation goals such as going to college, the military, building trades and manufacturing opportunities with local companies.

4. I have a professional background in engineering and construction-development projects. I have

taken a direct interest in upgrading our schools to meet current life-safety standards, ADA requirements, school security and building infrastructure improvements.

Examples of these initiatives include the completion of over \$4 million of capital improvements over the last three years for various school upgrades such as new boilers, fire suppression systems, elevator installation, renovated restrooms for ADA compliance, lighting and security upgrades.

I have lived in Rocky Hill for over 17 years with my wife Kimberly and children Madison and Gavin. I have been actively involved in the community, serving as a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for six years.

I have assisted in the development of special needs youth programs such as the Sea Cubs and Challenger Baseball. I volunteer as a coach in various youth programs such as Little League Baseball, park and recreation programs and Rocky Hill Travel Basketball.

Judi Murphy Democrat

1. In providing necessary education services I would contact others who have the best knowledge to what is available to our citizens in Rocky Hill. Also, I would research all of the services avail-

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BERLIN \$18.50/sf NEW CONSTRUCTION RETAIL space. 1,700 -100,000 sf available. In high traffic area with high visibility, near CVS, Michaels, Home Depot and other national chains. Will build to suit.	BERLIN \$242,500 AWARD WINNING DESIGN. Open-concept YOUNG condo with garage & upgraded appliances and finishes. Unique end unit offers privacy, breathtaking views and scenic trails.	ROCKY HILL \$165,000 ANTIQUE TREASURE. Lovingly maintained and true to its period. Original woodworking and details, 4 working fireplaces, 2 with rear bake ovens. Wide plank floors and exposed beams. New roof.
		
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able in the community and beyond that everyone could have access to.

Also, to find out what services are free and offered through Rocky Hill resources and to maximize and utilize experienced volunteers in the field of education.

2. Right now the most important issue is the overcrowding, we need smaller classes for quality education for all of our students. I would work with other board members and the superintendent on how we could work together and implement the smaller ratio of students.

3. We need to accommodate the needs of all ethnic backgrounds of our students and be an all-inclusive school system so that they don't seek private schools or send their children elsewhere. We need to educate our staff of the ethnic backgrounds of our influx of new students to meet their needs as well as others.

4. I have a masters in educational leadership and over 10 years of counseling. I have interviewed over 400 women in the correctional facilities and got them connected to all GED, two-year and four-year colleges.

I have been an avid tutor, substitute teacher and Counselor for all VTE students to become state certified to teach in the technical education school system.

Kimberly Kehoe Republican

1. As a new candidate, I am familiar with challenges facing our district, but will approach each situation and decision with fresh eyes. My focus will be in working with the team to choose the best practices for the students of Rocky Hill.

There will be numerous decisions to be made in regard to the coming intermediate school and it is our responsibility to ensure that the project is completed and prepared to open in a fiscally responsible manner so the taxpayers are not over-burdened.

In addition to the intermediate school, it will be our responsibility to ensure that all of our schools have the resources and training needed to keep Rocky Hill a competitive influence among other districts in our region.

2. The biggest issue is our growing population. I am hoping to join a board of individuals who worked tirelessly to rectify this situation with a long-term solution that gained the support of the residents of this town. However, this project is just beginning and the exterior structure to house our students is just one part of the solution.

As a member of the Board of Education, I will use my background as an educator to ensure that all of our curriculum choices align with the STEM components with an emphasis on technology for the students in grades four and five to ensure that they are fully prepared for the academic



Judi
Murphy

Is the Flag Still There?

During the unsuccessful bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British warships (Sept. 13-14, 1814), Francis Scott Key was inspired by the sight of the **American Flag** still flying. He wrote the words that were later set to music to become our National Anthem: "O say does that star-spangled banner still wave, over the land of the free, and the home of the brave."

Our flag and National Anthem represent our **Declaration of Independence** and our **Constitution**. **Failure to honor and to understand this relationship makes for and encourages the present movement towards socialism, etc.** When people seek to work out their problems or grievances **by attacking the structure of the ship they are on out in the ocean, such is destructive folly.** Doing so **ignorantly or willfully** makes for personal and public loss.

REMEMBER THE 31-WORD PLEDGE:
I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE... I am RESPONSIBLE as an INDIVIDUAL not to take our freedom for granted and thus to risk losing it.

...AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS... Not a DEMOCRACY (Rule by the Ruled) but a REPUBLIC (a Constitutional Republic governed by law where I am represented). The word DEMOCRACY does not appear in our documents of LIBERTY (The Declaration of Independence, The Articles of Confederation, the Constitution or the Bill of Rights).

...ONE NATION, UNDER GOD... our right to know that LIFE and LIBERTY are GOD-GIVEN RIGHTS, not the GRANT of GOVERNMENT. Our Constitution gives us a government limited to the delegated authority that "WE THE PEOPLE" allotted to each branch of civil government.

...WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL... LIBERTY is the love of individual independence, being free from tyrannical rule and control— a LIBERTY that does not degenerate into license. The Liberty Bell and the Statue of Liberty are fitting symbols. JUSTICE is "the virtue which consists in GIVING TO EVERYONE WHAT IS HIS DUE." Thus justice calls for law and equity, right rules and fair play for all. This explains the once prevailing concept in America—PUNISHMENT TO FIT THE CRIME.

To lose the meaning of OUR FLAG is to encourage the loss of our Republican form of government and our God-given, responsible pursuit of LIFE and LIBERTY.

"REMEMBER, O LORD, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. **REMEMBER** not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy **REMEMBER** Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O LORD." (Psalm 25:6-7). "Like as a father pitith his children, so the LORD pitith them that fear Him. For he knoweth our frame; **HE REMEMBERETH** that we are dust" (Psalm 103:13,14). **"REMEMBER ME, O LORD,** with the favour that Thou bearest unto thy people. O visit me with Thy salvation" (Psalm 106:4).

May you be BOTHERED to the point of being BLESSED. May our GRAND OLD FLAG remind us of our great American HERITAGE, "one nation **under God**" without Whose grace we cannot survive the erosion and corrosion of our day. May you look to the GOD OF TRUTH in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (who said, "I am THE TRUTH"— John 14:6), so that you might REST in the TRUTH of God's Word ("the TRUTH shall make you free"— John 8:32) and the TRUTH of God's Son ("the SON shall make you free"—John 8:36). To RECEIVE HIM is to receive the **LIFE** and **LIBERTY** He alone can give (John 1:12).

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Kimberly
Kehoe



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demands of the middle school and beyond.

In addition to technology, I believe our students should be exposed to world language at a younger age and the intermediate school would be an ideal venue to begin. This will give them a secure foundation to build on once entering the middle school, rather than waiting until seventh grade to begin.

3. In a time of economic uncertainty in regard to educational funding from the state, I believe it is necessary for our elected Board of Education members to put aside any political differences to make decisions that will always put the differentiated needs of our students and educators first.

With strong elementary schools, the addition of the intermediate school, a comprehensive middle school and a newly renovated high school, we will have a solid foundation to keep our district a desirable place for families in the future.

Furthermore, adapting to changing academic demands as our district accommodates the new social studies and next generation science standards will require our board to work together to make fiscally responsible decisions that will be in the best interest of our students.

4. As a parent of children in the district, Shauna, 12, and Johnny, 10, I have a vested interest in the education of our children. One of the factors that

brought us to Rocky Hill 13 years ago was the strong school system.

As a member of the Board of Education, I will use my background in education to make well-informed decisions to ensure that Rocky Hill remains a solid district for years to come.

Rene "Skip" Rivard Democrat

1. Education must remain a top public priority during these tight budget times. At this writing, the Connecticut legislature has failed to adopt a budget. Rocky Hill may lose municipal aid from the state Education Cost Sharing grant.

Our schools are primarily funded through property taxes and the state makes a supplemental contribution. If the grant is not reinstated, or supplemented in some manner, our school system may lose funds from its budget projections.

The board must be fiscally conservative while assuring that any budget reduction will not negatively impact our students and classrooms.

2. Public education has become competitive. Parents can choose alternate education options such as charter schools, private schools and home schooling.

While most municipalities have reported decreasing enrollments, Rocky Hill has shown

increased enrollment of 2.8 percent from 2012-2016. With board support, our dedicated administration, faculty and staff must continue to offer academically competitive and exciting instructional programs.

Priorities include making the schools safe, comfortable, academically exciting and updated with the latest technology.

During this challenging financial crisis, the board must make wise financial decisions having a positive impact on student achievement and maintaining the quality of our school facilities.

3. Rocky Hill currently delivers quality education to its student population. The board recently adopted the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Policy Manual. This comprehensive manual is continuously reviewed and updated.

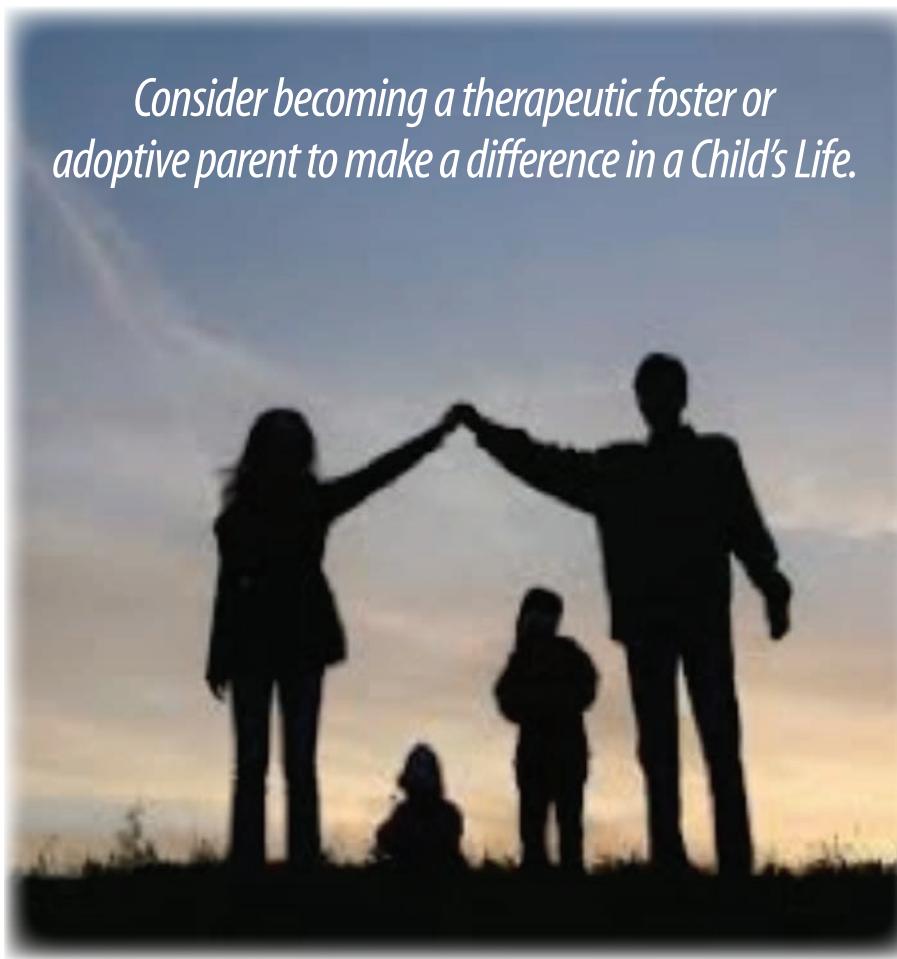
The board's vision must be supported by policies which target student achievement, are



**Rene "Skip"
Rivard**

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- open communication with Foundry and Ames property to benefit residents

★ Fiscal Responsibility

- expand tax relief for seniors
- explore efficiencies in govt through consolidation and cross training staff
- investigate sharp increases in MDC water bills

★ Govt Ethics

- hire a professional town manager
- ensure town council adheres to town charter avoiding costly legal fees

★ Education

- work to alleviate school over-crowding
- we will work with police dept to rectify “unfunded” school resource officer position
- manage intermediate school construction to avoid the half million dollar cost over run and contractor lawsuits on the high school project



HENRY VASEL **MAYOR**

- local small business owner
- 18-year active member Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Dept.
- multiple firefighting awards including outstanding achievement and firefighter of the year
- B.S. degree in finance
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TOWN COUNCIL



RALPH "LARRY" LINDENBERGER

- current member Farmland Preservation
- former commissioner open space and conservation
- organizer of "SOS" save open space initiative
- 26-year veteran and former assistant chief Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Dept.



MICHELE COLLINS

- local small business
- B.S. in environmental design
- A.S. in landscape construction
- former teacher agricultural education

TOWN COUNCIL



CINDY TANGNEY

- lifelong resident
- over 15 years in emergency management and homeland security
- B.A. degree in English literature
- leadership roles in several presidentially-declared disasters
- will work with families for a positive future

Approved by Henry Vasel, Michele Collins, Ralph "Larry" Lindenberger, Frank Szeps, Cindy Tangney and Cathy Vargas. Paid for by Unite Rocky Hill. Holly Szeps, Treasurer; Tom Beaudoin, Asst. Treasurer and Henry Vasel, 32 Grimes Road, Rocky Hill.

TOWN COUNCIL



CATHY VARGAS

- current town councilor
- former BOE member 10 years
- over 30 years financial experience
- common sense leadership



FRANK SZEPS

- former BOE member
- former deputy mayor
- sound fiscal budgeting
- chairman of economic development

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accountability driven and focused on improving student achievement. Policies must be clearly defined describing the results of what we want our schools to achieve, ways to monitor progress and ensure that desired outcomes are being achieved.

Board members must have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system, and its ability to teach all children at high levels.

4. Married to my best friend Jenney, Rocky Hill has been home since 1979. Our two daughters are successful graduates of the Rocky Hill school system. My passion is education. A veteran educator with 32 years experience, I'm a professor of ophthalmic design and dispensing at Middlesex Community College and was a curriculum committee/course advisor for Charter Oak State College.

My business background includes a 20-year association in my dad's business, Rivard Opticians in Hartford, and then as president of Rivard-Contact Lens Associates, which had 10 successful locations. Currently executive director of the Connecticut Opticians Association, my responsibilities include legislative affairs, business management and continuing education.

I'm President of Rivard Eyecare Technologies, a national business management and consulting firm and was director of contact lens services at Yale Eye Center, Yale University, School of Medicine. Appointed by the governor, I chair the Board of Examiners for Opticians which adjudicates complaints and develops testing procedures to license opticians.

Experience counts. I was first elected to the board in 2005. My tenure continues to strengthen my respect for the teachers, administrators and staff of our school system. Their responsibility to guide our most precious assets, our children, is often overlooked and often underappreciated.

I know how to listen. If reelected, I will listen to the voices of our citizens and work with the board to reach consensus. Working together, Rocky Hill will continue to be recognized for its successful school system and for the productive citizens we have educated.

Frank Morse Republican

1. For the past 10 years I have worked to provide the best education for our students while always being concerned with the costs. The Rocky Hill per-student expenditure is in the bottom third compared to the rest of the state and our DRG.

We have worked hard to create a challenging curriculum with the right mix of administrators, teachers and specialists to ensure our students are successful in Rocky Hill and then in college, the military or the work force. The board has actually returned funding to the town the past several years to assist in the cuts

that the state continues to pass down to the municipalities and to utilize in enhancing our schools infrastructure.

2. The biggest is, of course, our enrollment. Rocky Hill has seen a substantial growth in our district, unlike most towns in Connecticut. The board worked with the local officials and residents of Rocky Hill to successfully pass a referendum for a



Frank
Morse

new intermediate school on property owned by the town. This will alleviate the classrooms that are stretched beyond the board recommendations size guidelines in the elementary schools.

With the new school, we must look at our curriculum from bottom to top to increase the STEM components – science, technology, engineering and math – along with introducing world languages in the intermediate school. This will help our students be ready to compete in the national and global markets.

3. The state continues to attempt to increase the number of credits needed to graduate high school, along with having the seniors complete a capstone project. I welcome this change as it increases the math and science credits along with providing students the opportunity to work on a major project similar to what they may have to do in college.

The state needs to provide fair funding to school districts in both the Education Cost Sharing grants and construction reimbursement percentages to ensure that all children get equal opportunity. With this said, if districts are not spending funds wisely, then the state should step in and look at why their per-pupil expenditures are so much higher than others that are performing at a higher level.

4. I believe in paying it forward. Even though my three daughters are done or completing their Rocky Hill educational experience, I will continue to work hard to provide excellent opportunities the children in Rocky Hill.

I will work with the teaching staff and administrators to come to conclusions for what is best for our students. I am a professional engineer and use my knowledge of construction to ensure that our buildings are a safe, effective learning environment with the tools needed for our children to succeed. **RHL**

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News roundup



Sebby Sorrentino honored
Several Italian-American people were honored at the recent Columbus Day Parade in Hartford. Rocky Hill was among the many towns that sent a contingent to march. Sebby Sorrentino, a member of the Rocky Hill Sons of Italy, was honored for his community service. He is shown with Vincent Lombardo.

Free GED instruction

Free GED tutoring for Cromwell and Rocky Hill residents is available at Middletown Adult Education, 398 Main St., Middletown. Day and evening classes are offered. Call 860-343-6044 for more information.

Nutmeg wins award

Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union was presented with the state level Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award from the Credit Union League of Connecticut. It is one of two state-wide winners of this honor and now moves on as a finalist on the national level.

Nutmeg was recognized for its 2017 Credit Union Youth Week fundraiser in April benefitting the March of Dimes. Nutmeg employees donated \$10 each and were granted a "dress down" week. At the end of the week, the staff unified in wearing purple to show their commitment to the cause. All accounts opened that week were met with a \$10 matching donation from the credit union to the March of Dimes. In five days, Nutmeg was able to raise \$2,000 to help the organization.



98th birthday

Angelo D'Ambrosio, 98, seated, of Rocky Hill was honored on his 98th birthday with recognition by state Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Sean Connolly and Mayor Claudia Baio, both standing. D'Ambrosio is a military veteran.

Nutmeg awarded grant

Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union, chartered and headquartered in Rocky Hill, was awarded a Community Development Financial Institution Fund grant for its work to help serve the minority, immigrant, under-served and emerging markets within Connecticut.

The credit union was awarded \$686,500 and is one of two Connecticut institutions to receive funds. This money will help subsidize programs for new loans to those who would otherwise be denied or unable to obtain a loan. Nutmeg's new programs will finance new stepping stones for these individuals and families.

Hearing officers needed

The town government is seeking detail-oriented individuals to serve as volunteer hearing officers for appeals of zoning and blight violations. Applicants must be registered to vote and maintain a primary residence in Rocky Hill.

Anyone willing to serve in this capacity is asked to contact David Palmberg, zoning enforcement officer, at 860-258-7675 or dpalmberg@rockyhillct.gov. **RHL**

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UNITE ROCKY HILL

Join Us in Supporting Henry Vasel

The taxpayers will soon be faced with a very important decision; who will serve as our newly elected Mayor. The Mayor's office has but one desk and one chair, so we must choose. When I weigh the merits of each candidate, the decision becomes easy, Henry Vasel.

Henry has given generously of his time and considerable intellect to public service. He has been an advocate for the Town. His personal commitment of time to the Town is indisputable. I hope when each voter considers who is best qualified to lead our Town you will reach the same candidate as I, Henry Vasel.

Joe Leal

I am supporting Henry Vasel for several reasons, but I will focus on those which I believe are most germane to the Rocky Hill community.

Experience matters. Henry has been on the Council for the past 4 years and knows how the Town operates. No hands on training needed. He is committed to continuing to build on the positive relationship he has created with residents.

I believe Henry is the best choice to be Rocky Hill's next Mayor and I urge you to vote for him.

Gerry Henri

I am encouraged to learn from the Stamford Advocate article that the numbers of unaffiliated voters on the national, state and local level are growing significantly, and the base of voter sentiment that rejects leaderships by special interest and party agendas is having a profound effect on election results. We are at a cross-roads and more of us are realizing that the complex challenges of our times, educational, economic and social absolutely demand government leaders that truly represent the people, lead by example, and are totally committed to the needs of all their constituents.

I believe Independent mayoral candidate Henry Vasel is the leader who possesses the values, principals, skills and total dedication to the people of Rocky Hill that is so needed right now. With Henry his word is his promise, his reflective thinking demonstrates his creative problem solving approach, coupled with his strong business background, and most importantly, his commitment to fairness, integrity, and respect for the individual which is the foundation for his decisions. You can trust Henry to represent you, the individual, NOT a particular party and NOT the special interest groups which the growing unaffiliated voters are rejecting in our country.

If you believe in Henry Vasel, please follow your convictions and vote on Nov. 7 and know you are part of the growing wave throughout the United States that is making choices on principles. It is encouraging that voters are recognizing they can have a real voice for their families. Just imagine what Rocky Hill can be, Henry can make it happen.

Bethany Puniello

I attended the Mayoral debate at the high school last week and I believe some clear differences between the candidates emerged. Henry Vasel stood above his opponents, he has the experience to lead. I want a Mayor who knows how to help business, small and large, to create new jobs. I believe Henry has the right blend of government and business experience and I am supporting him for Mayor.

Chris Flaherty



Approved by Henry Vasel. Paid for by Unite Rocky Hill Vote Henry for Mayor, 32 Grimes Road, Rocky Hill

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ROCKY HILL

g Henry Vasel for Mayor

We write today as a special group who have had the privilege of serving the residents of Rocky Hill as Town Councilors. Together, we have served the residents of Rocky Hill for over 60 years. In those years we have learned a thing or two about Rocky Hill and you, the residents. Some of us ran against each other-and at times-have disagreed with one another, but today we speak with a United voice.

In the years election for Mayor there is a clear and obvious choice. Henry Vasel is our proud choice to serve as Mayor. Henry has demonstrated competence, balance and wisdom beyond his years. In issue after issue, Henry considers all sides and makes fair choices. As a veteran volunteer firefighter he has protected the residents and their future by protecting the budget. He has balanced that with an intelligent approach to the invigoration of our town. He represents the kind of Mayor we all want.

We have watched Henry through the years. He went to college, started his own business and settled in Rocky Hill. Henry served as a Planning and Zoning Commissioner bringing fresh ideas and energetic perspective to our community. He has carried this passion with him to the Council.

Henry is respected, accomplished and capable. He is our choice in the race for Mayor of Rocky Hill. We urge you to join us and the hundreds of Rocky Hill citizens, and elect Henry Vasel as Rocky Hill's next Mayor.

Prior Town Councilors
Michael Gerace
Rocco Sanzo
Nadine Bell
Bill Macdonald

I urge every voter in Rocky Hill to seriously consider what it will take to be our next Mayor and then cast your vote for Henry Vasel.

While we love living in our beautiful town, we have serious issues, and need a true leader in the Mayor's office to guide us through these times. Henry understands that our next Mayor will need to provide the leadership necessary for all parts to work together to be successful. Under Henry's leadership, the Office of Mayor will open lines of communications with the citizens, something that is sorely missing.

Henry isn't afraid to challenge the status quo and ask the tough questions, rather than dismissing an issue or passing it to someone else to fix. He has proven this time and time again.

Rocky Hill needs a Mayor with integrity, character and responsibility. This person is Henry Vasel.

Terry Messenger

The public and I have had ample opportunities in the past weeks to analyze the aims and objectives of the candidates for Mayor. Henry's practical and honest approach sets him apart from the rest. A volunteer fireman, he has shown great concern for the community, and his willingness to listen to peoples problems is commendable. I am writing today to show my allegiance and support for his campaign.

I am voting for Henry Vasel for Mayor.

Jay Kelly

It is with great pleasure and honor I throw my support behind Henry Vasel for Mayor.

Henry is a local man who graduated from CCSU. He decided to make Rocky Hill his home and serve on the Rocky Hill volunteer fire department. His loyalty to the community is unflappable.

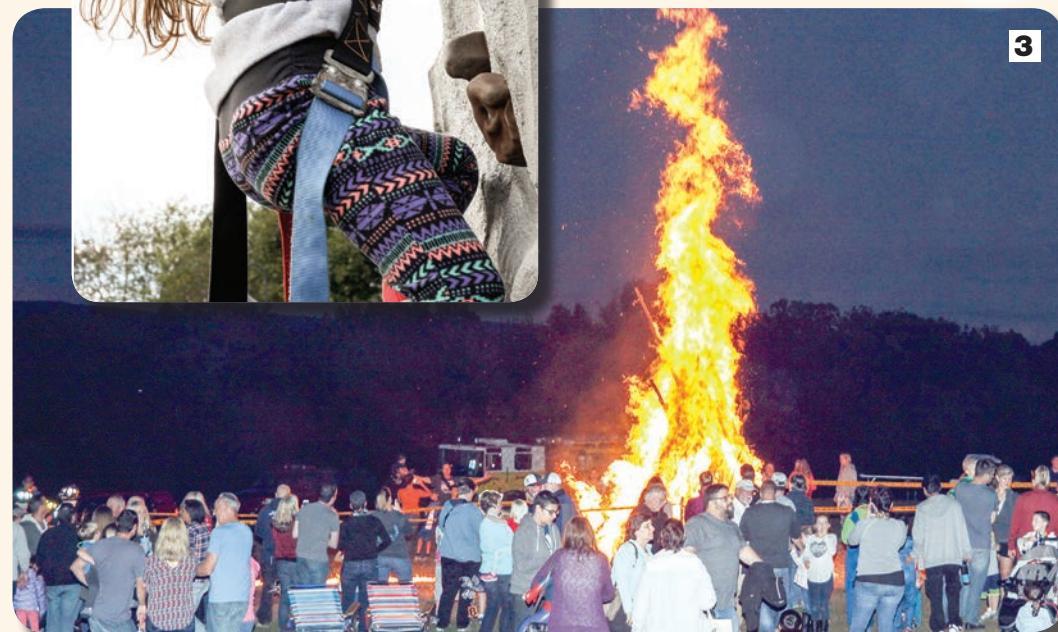
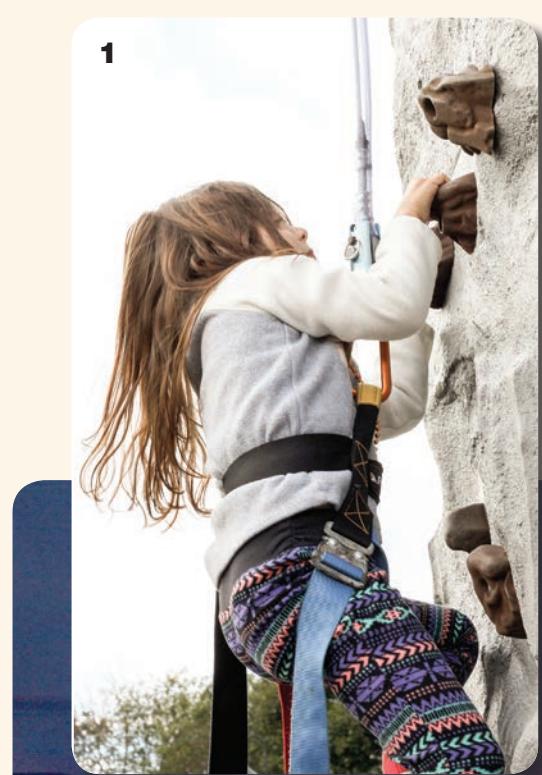
He is seeking your support for Mayor, I cannot think of anyone more suited to do the job.

Elections are approaching, and you deserve a say in who is Mayor of your town. Voting for Henry Vasel is a vote for the common man!

Craig Reidinger

Slice of LIFE

photos by Lisa Brisson



Fallfest and Food Truck Festival

1. Emma Santos, 5, climbs the rock wall. 2. Jennifer Zappulla and Mary Hogan of the Cora J. Belden Library flank Rita Chhabra of the Parks and Recreation Department as they oversee the activities for children. 3. The bonfire is lit, with members of the Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Department at the ready to extinguish it. 4. The town's first responders were honored during country singer Steve Daggett's show. 5. Avery Barrett, 1, dons her cowgirl costume. 6. Ryan Halpin, 3, won a prize for his costume of Woody from "Toy Story." 7. Firefighters from the Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Department stand by to extinguish the bonfire. 8. Emily Mattatall, 4, is happy to have secured the coveted Hello Kitty race car. 9. Youngsters parade around for the judges in their Halloween costumes. 10. Ben Saccullo, 5, gives his best pirate "aaarrrggghhh." 11. Julia Aleksandrowicz, 10, and Leah Potter, 11, reach into the witch's cauldron at the library's tent for a creepy treat. 12. Felicity Frate, 16, and her 10-year-old sister Farrah dig into some soft-serve ice cream. 13. The Ferris wheel was only one of the amusement rides for Fallfest attendees to enjoy. 14. Miles McDonald has a bit of a difficult time staying on the Great Pumpkin Rodeo mechanical ride. 15. Doris Ouimette enjoys a ride on the Sizzler with her granddaughter Madisen, 6. 16. Candice Edmonds, 10, had everyone's heads turning with her dinosaur costume.



**A little at a time,
the dream came true**

**The Root System celebrates
more than three decades in business**

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Nestled on Main Street, The Root System has been a picturesque scene of plants and flowers for more than three decades. Now its own unique business owned by Julie Zadjura, the shop began as a side project for a gas station that was formerly located next door. She began working there in the mid-1980s in the garden, growing and preparing cut flowers to be sold on site. "That's when I got my itch for flowers and growing," she said. She quickly came to love her position, but in the begin-

Located on Main Street, The Root System has been providing cut and potted plants and flowers for more than three decades.

Photos by Allie Rivera

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Wendy Fish-Lawrence & David Lawrence, Artistic Directors



A tin rooster sits outside of the greenhouse at The Root System. The rooster and other gift items are for sale in addition to an array of plants and flowers.

ning those who hired her were unsure if she was up to task for the physically challenging work.

"It wasn't considered girl's work," Zadjura said. "It took a lot of coercing to get him to hire me."

The Rocky Hill resident quickly proved her worth. She continued working with flowers, managing a floral shop in East Hartford while continuing to dream of some day owning her own business.

Zadjura furthered her working relationship with the family that owned the gas station and garden and when they decided to sell they offered her first right of refusal. Once she purchased the space, she quickly began to morph The Root System into her dream garden center.

"Well first, we put up this building," she said, gesturing to the main center that stands today. "A little at a time, the dream came true."

Since making the space her own, Zadjura has continued to make changes every year. She replaced two soft-covered greenhouses with an updated, modern facility in which to continue growing, as well as adding gift shop items to her inventory.

"I expand this on a yearly basis," she said. "One of the big expansions

is since Tapestry Rose closed in Cromwell, I've started picking up the gift shop items. We are always reinventing ourselves."

"Julie is always refreshing things and moving things around," Nan Gineo, her sister and an employee at the shop, said. "It's really an asset to the neighborhood."

That idea of family business is important to Zadjura, just as it had been important to those who came before her.

"It is and always has been a family business," she said. "We have three part-time employees and then any family member that wants to volunteer."

Married for 43 years, she said that over the past three decades all five of her children have spent time helping in the shop, being it hands on in the greenhouses, providing customer service in the store or helping behind the scenes with social media.

"All of my kids worked for me. They had to help out in the business," she said with a smile. "Everybody has a job."

In addition to the friendly and familial atmosphere created at The Root System, both sisters said it is



Julie Zadjura, owner of The Root System, is happy to offer guidance and support for those looking to further their own gardens.

the quality they provide that has kept them in business for so long.

"Julie is very passionate about her work and that comes through in everything that she does," Gineo said. "If something comes in and doesn't meet her standard, it doesn't stay."

Because of that, they have seen many customers return season after season. Along with gift items and potted plants for sale, Zadjura also creates custom floral arrangements for all occasions, including weddings and funerals.

"She truly makes some stunning pieces," Gineo said.

The passion for creating unique floral arrangements is as strong now as it was when Zadjura began.

"I love the challenge of special requests of any kind," she said. "We're fresh, we're innovative and we're always thinking new."

Despite the numerous years in business and her joy in creating floral arrangements, at one point she contemplated walking away from her dream job.

"I did put it up for market about three years ago," she said. "My husband was of retirement age and so we thought about it."

When she was unable to sell, she took that as a sign to dive even further into the business.

"We thought, to heck with it. We'll make it bigger and better," she said.

In the three years since then she has kept that promise. Her next big challenge is to open up the back part

of the property next spring for further retail space.

The Root System is open year-round for customers, including an active holiday season during which it sells Christmas trees, wreaths and other decorations and plants.

Delving into the business included expanding how it interacts with the community at large. Being able to give back in the town where she has spent so much of her life has always been a priority for Zadjura.

Throughout the year, she recycles and refinishes old vases customers bring in and donates them, along with a variety of flowers, to local senior centers and nursing homes.

"I like to bring extra flowers over there when I can," she said. "If it's something we can reuse and they can use in the nursing home, then that's great."

In addition to those efforts, she has also recently become involved with the Society of American Florists' Petal It Forward program each October.

"We go out armed with bunches of flowers and we give two to people," she said. "We say you can have one and give the other to someone you think needs it."

"This is the greatest place in the world," Gineo said with a smile, surrounded by flowers. "It's no wonder she has a wonderful following of people who appreciate her work." **RHL**

The Root System is located at 3228 Main St. It can be reached at 860-394-7668 or visit it online at root-systemflowers.com.

Representatives of the Rocky Hill Police Department attended the recent Founder's Day celebration at Henkel to thank the international corporation for its support of the police K9 program. Shown are, from left, Chief Michael Custer, Henkel executive Jeff Piccolomini, Lt. Erik Gutsfeld, Officer Keith Baker and his German shepherd Maverick.



Photo by Sgt. Steve Morgan

Henkel commits to the community

Provides funds for police department to acquire and train new dog

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Henkel is one of the largest taxpayers in town. But its financial involvement doesn't stop there. The German-owned company has made it a priority to sponsor a variety of community events and activities since constructing a large office building on Corporate Ridge.

The most recent example of that was fully funding a specially trained dog for the Rocky Hill Police Department. Several members of the department, including Chief Michael Custer, attended the company's Founder's Day barbecue Sept. 26 to publicly thank all of the employees for their support.

"They're very civic minded and they want to be involved in the community," Custer said. "It costs \$10,000 to \$15,000 to bring one of these dogs online."

Officer Keith Baker is the department's K9 officer. He was assigned a dog named Rudy two years ago but the animal died in a sudden and unexpected manner. There was no money in the budget to purchase a replacement.

Baker was heartbroken and shared that information with a friend who works at Henkel.

Unbeknownst to him, that

"When the opportunity to sponsor K9 Maverick presented itself, we were very happy to be able to help out in such an impactful way."

- Jeffrey Piccolomini

friend ran the thought of helping RHPD up the company's chain of command and it was decided to cut the police department a \$15,000 check to replace Rudy with Baker's current K9 partner, Maverick.

"We were able to go out and get another dog," Custer said. "They also expressed a willingness in the future to help us in any way."

Lisa Zerio, director of parks and recreation, also offered praise for Henkel and its contributions that go beyond supporting the police.

"They have been wonderful to the town. They have co-sponsored the [Fallfest] fireworks with Burris every year. If it wasn't for these two businesses, there would be no fireworks, which is the highlight and grand finale of the event," she said.

Henkel also sponsors the town's summer concert series at Elm Ridge Park. It's part of the corporate culture.

"Henkel has enjoyed a very positive relationship with the Rocky Hill Police Department for many years. When the opportunity to sponsor K9 Maverick presented itself, we were very happy to be able to help out in such an impactful way," Jeffrey Piccolomini, head of finance for Henkel North America, said.

"Rocky Hill is not only a great place to live, it's a great place to do business," he added. "As good corporate citizens, we have been committed to working with the town of Rocky Hill to help support important programs and events in our community."

Other Henkel sponsorships include the Wethersfield Craft Fair, Manchester Road Race and Little Manchester Road Race, American Cancer Society Relay for Life, Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families, Connecticut Special Olympics and the state

Veteran's Home and Hospital.

Piccolomini said Henkel offers its employees the opportunity to suggest charitable donations and event participation for organizations that have personal meaning for them.

Two promoted to lieutenant

The police department recently promoted two members to the rank of lieutenant, filling one vacancy and creating a lower-level command position in place of a deputy chief's position that was cut from the budget two years ago.

Erik Gutsfeld and Joseph Phelps now sport a silver bar on the collar of their uniforms. Custer is pleased to have three leadership positions under his command once again.

Phelps is in charge of the patrol division. Gutsfeld oversees criminal investigations and communications and Lt. Brian Klett, who already held that rank, is the administrative lieutenant.

"It's a nice distribution of responsibilities," Custer said.

He added that the department was successful in its quest to achieve state accreditation as a top-performing law enforcement agency. It will now pursue national accreditation. **RHL**

Chess, anyone? Library is looking to recruit enthusiasts of ages-old game

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Lewis Nedell enjoys chess. He's guessing that there are probably at least a few other people in town who share his interest. All he needs now is to get them together at the same place and at the same time.

That's the goal as he is trying to start a new adult chess group at the Cora J. Belden Library. The participants will decide which days and times are most convenient and go from there.

"I just retired at the end of March," Nedell, 70, said.

He ran a business that performed title searches and examinations. The 43-year town resident wants to do something to keep his mind sharp and considers chess ideal for that.

"I played chess as a child and in college," he recalled.

His playing waned as he became an adult. He taught the game to his daughters but they exhibited little interest in pursuing it.

"I like the game because it makes me think and makes me concentrate," he said. "I haven't played in many years."

There is also scientific evidence that playing a mind-engaging game like chess may help ward off dementia as people grow older. He also enjoys the social aspect of the game.

The library has several chess boards that roll out like placemats and full sets of pieces to accompany them. The sets can be used in house or checked out just like a book.

All skill levels are welcome. The library has a selection of books about chess to help people learn the game

or improve their play. Nedell believes he has found the ideal location for this activity.

"It's a very nice library. They do a lot of good things. There are a lot of activities for adults and children," he said.

Library Director Mary Hogan fully supports his effort.

"I think it's a perfect fit for the library. We're trying to connect people who have a passion for chess," she said.

Hogan added that the library used to hold game days but that was a while back.



Lewis Nedell and Library Director Mary Hogan play a game of chess at the Cora J. Belden Library. Nedell hopes to start a chess group at the library.

"We're all about lifelong learning and keeping our brains active," she said. **RHL**

Anyone interested in learning more about this new chess group may contact Nedell at 860-918-4429 or Hogan at 860-258-7621.



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LIFE

in the classroom

Unified Arts classes expand both hearts and minds

by Allie Rivera

Staff Writer

Students at Griswold Middle School spend much of their school day tackling math, history, science and language arts. But the time spent in their other classes is considered just as valuable.

"Our Unified Arts team is pretty much what the kids get outside of the core classes," Principal Rick Watson said.

The Unified Arts group of teachers is the largest team in the school, consisting of 15 educators in the areas of music, band and strings, physical education and health, technology education, family and consumer science, library and media studies and art.

"Unified Arts are valuable because they give students the chance to use a different part of their brains," team leader and technology education teacher Steve Patarini said. "The change of pace of a UA class allows students to return to academic classes refreshed and refocused and ready for new learning."

By providing such a diverse array of classes, the UA teachers said students have the opportunity to explore areas in which they may not have otherwise participated.

"We kind of give the kids a sampler," Patarini said. "It's exploratory and gets them interested in possibly going further at the high school level."

While UA classes in some districts are either shrinking or becoming elective, all students at GMS are required to take all of the UA classes.

"They can get an introductory class to something they may never have done before," music teacher Liz Selig said.

In her general music classes, students have the opportunity to learn instruments that some may continue

to play well into adulthood. In Selig's classes, they learn both the guitar and piano along with elements of music composition, introduction to reading music and music video production.

"It's a great opportunity to learn and parents don't have to pay for outside lessons, which can be expensive," Selig said.

Along with the general music classes, which all students take, the school also offers additional music electives during free periods including band, chorus, strings and jazz band, led by band teacher Rebekah Harding and strings teacher Emily Czywczynski.

"Even though they're electives, they're still a large part of the curriculum," chorus teacher Kim Quinn said. "The ensembles still have regular assessments."

Though not required, many members of the elective ensembles participate in regional competitions.

"It's very good feedback and it gives us something to work for," Quinn said.

The ensembles hold performances throughout the year including concerts at the school, Cora J. Belden Library, and even at sporting events for the Hartford Wolf Pack and Hartford Yard Goats.

Whenever possible, the UA teachers try to work with one another to create interdisciplinary opportunities. The music and art programs have worked together to host art shows displaying student work to the sound of student-made music.

"They get to express themselves in a way that they may not get to in other classes," art teacher Mary Barnett-Frawley said.

The art classes at Griswold, also taught by Sue Gudat, allow students to explore a wide range of two- and



Students in Cheryl O'Connor's Family and Consumer Science class at Griswold Middle School learn about nutrition, child development and textile technology, among other areas.



Courtesy photos

three-dimensional art.

"We think of it like a survey class for the high school," Barnett-Frawley said. "We give them everything from clay to painting and computers."

Student projects include portraiture, functional pottery, collage, drawing from memory and package design in Photoshop, among other mediums, much of which is displayed during one of the three yearly art shows.

That use of technology is prevalent in all of the UA classes but most clearly in the technology education courses taught by Patarini and Andy Benson. The program includes both education in technology as well as time spent in the school's wood shop creating a variety of projects.

"We recently incorporated 3-D printing, computer coding and more robotics activities," Patarini said. "We try to feed the high school departments in this way with our robotics and engineering."

According to Patarini and Benson, the hands-on aspect of their

department allows students an outlet.

"They're using a different part of their brain, and not just in our class, but in all of these classes," Benson said.

Hands-on and practical applications are pertinent in the Family and Consumer Science Department as well. Led by teachers Leah O'Leary and Cheryl O'Connor, students learn skills to prepare them to function successfully as citizens, family members, parents, workers and consumers.

"It's not just cooking and sewing anymore," O'Connor said.

The department covers six core topics during the three years: nutrition and food, textile technology, family life, child development, living environments and personal management.

"We see a real variety of students who succeed in our classes," O'Connor said.

"We might see the kid who might not do as well in reading or writing but will excel with us and

truly love it," O'Leary added.

Students get the chance to learn about giving back to the community through service projects such as making hats, mittens and baby quilts donated to Connecticut Children's Medical Center and St. Vincent's Hospital, and breads donated to local food banks.

As they learn to become active citizens in family and consumer science, they also learn how to be responsible digital citizens in library and media studies.

"This year we are implementing a new library media program," Library Media Specialist Kim Lehn said. "One goal of this program is that through participation in these lessons students will be better prepared when navigating the digital world."

This year, students in sixth and seventh grade will be scheduled to meet with Lehn to cover the primary topics of digital citizenship and information literacy. She uses her lessons to teach them how to properly research topics and examine sources, as well as how to responsibly use the Internet.

For those students who prefer something more active, all middle schoolers are also required to take physical education and health, taught by Michael Gilbert, Tyrrell White, Lynn Skrzypiec and George Kisluk.

"We try to hit everyone's interests," Kisluk said. "We want to teach them lifetime activities so



Students in the technology education classes at Griswold Middle School explore 3-D printing, audio production and robotics, among others.

they can try to continue them outside of school."

The program covers a wide variety of units ranging from lacrosse to wrestling to yoga.

"We do the traditional sports, but we also include a lot of non-traditional sports," White said.

Along with the P.E. classes, each teacher is also assigned to teach a grade level of health classes.

"We focus on physical, social and mental and emotional health. We call it the health wheel," Kisluk said.

"Each level is taught by a different teacher and each grade has its own spin," White added.

With each of these different classes under the

UA umbrella, students have the opportunity to explore a wide variety of topics and that can be beneficial in numerous ways.

"I think a lot of it does teach life skills that they are going to use for the rest of their lives," O'Connor said.

"It allows them to find their strengths and shows them that they can pursue things outside of the classroom," Selig added.

Barnett-Frawley pointed out that many of the areas are also passions that students can use to fill their time in adulthood.

"This is what people do in their leisure time, too," she said. "If you turn on your TV, what are you watching? The build it, cook it, fix it shows."

While for many students the UA areas can simply be a fun place to succeed in school, each of the teachers stressed that Unified Arts also helps to further strengthen curricular goals.

"It teaches cooperation and team building, but we also support the curricula in academics," Patarini said. "Even down to in the wood shop, measuring out before you make a cut. You're using fractions."

Each of the teachers said that having such a strong UA program at the middle school is beneficial for all students and they are grateful that the school continues to support the programs.

"This is a very supportive district," Patarini said. **RHL**

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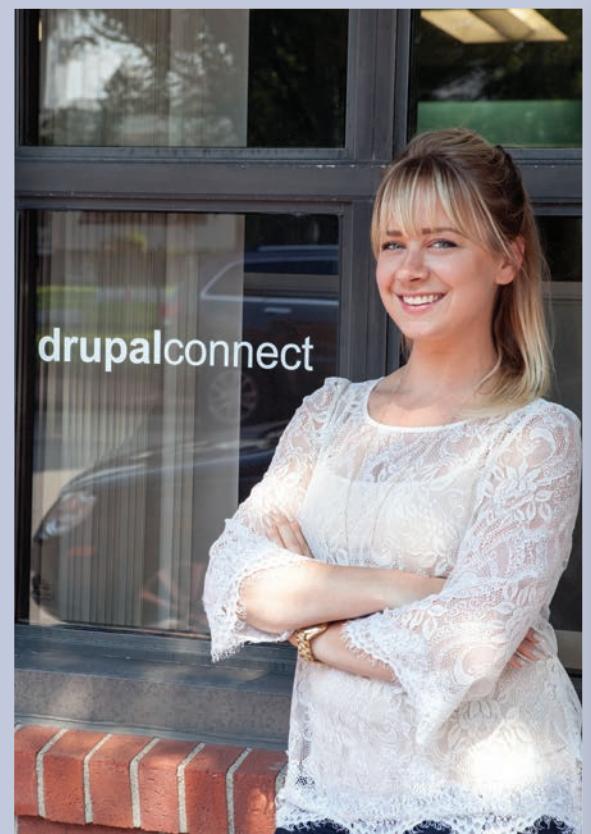
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Sadhana Ganesan, a third-grader at West Hill School, has been inline skating since she was 4. In the last three years she has won numerous medals including gold in inline speed skating and quad speed skating at the 2017 National Championships.

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

For 8-year-old Sadhana Ganesan, skating is life. The third-grader at West Hill School has been roller skating competitively since 2015, but her love of the sport began at age 4 when she and her family were still living in India.

"I was on the beach and I saw some people skating in India," she explained. "When I moved to America I started inline skating."

Knowing that places in the area offer competitive skating, Sadhana began asking her mother if she could compete.

"I asked her if we could just go and see, but they said I wasn't old enough," she said.

Not one to be easily disheartened, Sadhana began taking lessons and coaching from Mike Godin and Marc Benedict of Vortex Racing in Wilbraham, Mass.

"They said, you're really fast and maybe you would want to join a team," she recalled.

From there, her skating journey took off. She now practices five days per week and travels across the country for competitions.

It was in 2015 that Sadhana's hard work at her sport began paying off. In that year alone she won the regional championship, the Keystone League Inline Speed Skating championship and the National Inline Speed Skating Championship in the Tiny Tots division.

Since then, the number of medals she's earned has only grown. At the 2017 National Championships in Lincoln, Neb., Sadhana earned a gold medal in both inline speed skating and quad speed skating, as well as two silver and two additional gold medals in relay events.

"I don't normally get nervous when I skate, but for the National Championships I was a little nervous," she said. "It's a really good

feeling when you get a gold medal."

She has no plans of slowing down.

"I want to be on the world team and that takes a lot of effort," she said.

In addition to her rigorous skating schedule, Sadhana finds inspiration in looking up to professional skaters by following them on social media platforms.

"One of the best skaters in the world liked one of my photos," she said with excitement.

She hopes that by continuing to compete she can help bring awareness to skating as a sport.

"I just want skating to become more popular because I want it to become an Olympic sport," she said.

Along with inline skating, she ice skates recreationally.

"Everybody thinks skating is ice skating when really it's a three- or four-wheeled skate," she said. "Ice skating and inline skating are way different."

Although her sport has her prac-

ticing five days a week, including Saturdays and Sundays, Sadhana still makes time for her school work.

"I like science best because I like oceans and nature," she said.

"She does a lot and she really is a great kid," West Hill Assistant Principal Louise Adamow said.

Sadhana enjoys spending time with her family.

"I got to play tennis with my dad and it was so fun," she said.

She and her family try to travel back to India to see family whenever possible. She is now looking forward to a return trip in 2018 where she will spend two and a half months there.

"I'm really excited about it," she said.

With the most recent National Championship behind her, Sadhana is most looking forward to continuing to push herself to reach new heights in skating.

"I just really love it," she said.
RHL

Student of the month

West Hill School student is also skating star



"I just want skating to become more popular because I want it to become an Olympic sport."

— Sadhana Ganesan

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AD TEXT

Making the call

Frank Begen umpires games for multiple decades

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Frank Begen sat back in a tall, cushioned chair in his home and smiled. Behind him on a long shelf by the staircase was row after row of framed pictures with smiling family and friends peering out.

On the arm of the chair, sitting right beside Begen's hand, was a plain black baseball cap, an integral part of the uniform he wears as an umpire. Being an umpire is more than a hobby for him, it is a passion.

"I just love doing it," he said. "I would do it for free."

Growing up in Queens, N.Y., the Rocky Hill resident recalled spending childhood days watching the former New York Giants play the Brooklyn Dodgers.

"I grew up three quarters of a mile from Shea Stadium," he said. "I went back and the neighborhood has changed so much. Where all the ball parks are now, when I was a kid it was a great big swamp."

Commuting to high school in Brooklyn, Begen played for the school's track team, running hurdles and relays as well as throwing the javelin.

"I've always been good on my feet," he said with a small laugh.

In his later teen years he began playing baseball and after spending years in the U.S. Navy he switched to playing recreational softball. Then living on Long Island, Begen met and married his late wife Gloria and the two had six children. Since then he has also become a grandfather of 14 and great-grandfather of three.

It was when his oldest son Richard began playing Little League in the late 1950s that Begen's love of the game brought him from being on the field to behind home plate.

"I started umpiring when he was in Little League and I've just been going ever since," he said.

After spending three years as



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an umpire on Long Island, also working with high school and adult recreational leagues, Begen was offered a job that would move him to New Haven.

"I didn't move the whole family at first, so it was just me," he said. "So I started to do softball."

By day, he worked as a plant superintendent for a company that created printing plates for electro-type printers.

"Back when I got into that business, we used vinyl," he said. "I used to make plates for Life Magazine. They had a plant down in Old Saybrook and we would make the replacement plates."

Once established in Connecticut, he moved with his entire family to Stratford in 1964. There he became an umpire for college games in addition to high school and adult games.

"I remember there was a ball player named Ron Darling who played for Yale and I was umpiring their games," Begen recalled. "Who would have known that he would become a major league player."

Though his passion lay in officiating games, Begen soon found that he needed to make a change in his work/life balance and devote more time to his profession. He decided he had to stop umpiring college games

at the time.

As the world started to change, however, so did his work with electro-type printing.

"Offset printing started and offset knocked electro-type right out the window," he said. "Offset is an entirely different method and we went out of business after that."

Begen was out of work for six months with six children still living at home.

"I started going to employment agencies, but for a lot of jobs I was actually too qualified," he recalled.

Eventually, he was able to find a job in an entirely new field working for Aetna in its Bridgeport office.

After two and a half years in the position, he was transferred to the main office in Hartford and moved his family to Rocky Hill nearly 45 years ago.

It was at that point that he knew he would be able to further integrate himself into his passion, but once he arrived in town he found that his options were more limited than he expected.

"I moved up here and there was no softball board," he said.

With the help of some friends, Begen helped to start a softball league board here and became involved with the ASA Umpires, now part of USA Softball.

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Though no longer part of that original board, he has continued to take on leadership roles in the local softball community. In his current position he assigns umpires to high school, college and adult league games, although school games seem to be the most prominent.

"The guys for some reason are not playing softball like they used to," he said. "The Rocky Hill league, which I did for 40 years, they just folded. They joined with Wethersfield, which is the biggest league around now."

The games for which Begen assigns umpires also range in location, spanning from Cromwell up through the Farmington Valley. Still active as an umpire, he generally gives all assignments out to the others in the league before taking jobs for himself.

"I keep myself for last-minute cancellations," he said. "This past season I did probably 15 girls high school games."

Regardless of how long he has been an umpire, Begen has no plans to give the hobby up completely.

"I do it because I enjoy the game," he said. "You know when you do a good game and you don't need somebody telling you, but it's nice when the losing team says 'good game, ump.'"

When it comes to discussing the art of umpiring a game, he can talk for hours. He uses that knowledge and passion to teach clinics for other umpires and those aspiring to the position.

"You've got to stay on top of the rules," he said. "I tell them, when you

read the book and know what the rule is, try to picture the play, so when it happens in front of you, you can make the call right away."

Begen is also adamant that when it comes to being an umpire, knowing where to stand is one of the most important skills.

"Position is probably the most critical thing," he said. "You've got to be at the right angle to make the right call."

It's in these scenarios that his history competing in track helps him.

"I don't move as fast anymore, but I know where to be to make the right call," he said. "A lot of guys, they'll stay on the sides and then they're not in the position to make the right call. Judgement is something you can't teach anybody."

When it comes to watching major league games, he admitted that he doesn't like the new ability to re-watch and slow down plays.

"It's part of the game," he said. "You can only play what you see, but you get sight of the guys who don't have good judgement."

Looking forward, he hopes to see more people, especially women, train to become umpires. He has already started to see a new generation come about with his son Bob now umpiring slow-pitch games in the area.

"It's just something I want to see continue and grow," he said. **RHL**



"Position is probably the most critical thing. You've got to be at the right angle to make the right call."

– Frank Begen



Frank Begen, left, has been working as an umpire since his oldest son joined Little League in the late 1950s. This summer at the All-Star Men's Softball game at Maxwell Park, Begen co-umpired a game with his son, Bob Begen of Cromwell.

Photos courtesy of Stephanie Begen



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A blast from the past

Old photo reunites former baseball teammates

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

When Anna Greco unknowingly took out a photo from her youth to show her new friends at Middlewoods of Newington assisted living facility, she had no idea what was about to happen.

"I pulled my book out from under the television and this picture fell out," Greco recalled. "When I showed it to the ladies at my table, Nicky goes, 'that's me.'"

The photo, which dates from 1945, shows a baseball team of young women standing together, smiling for the camera. Squatted in the front row was Greco and standing behind her was Cecelia "Nicky" Wierbicki, now a fellow resident at Middlewoods of Newington.

"To meet again, after 72 years," Greco's voice trailed off, looking down at the photo.

Sports was an important part of their childhood.

"It's amazing to have these three things line up, first the baseball, then the wedding date and now to both be here at Middlewoods."

— Anna Greco

"I was always an athlete, even in high school," Wierbicki, a native of Newington, said. "I played basketball, too, but they never had a league for it."

Growing up in nearby New Britain, Greco similarly spent her youth on the field.

"I come from a family of nine, five brothers

and three sisters, plus me," she said. "Everybody played ball at that time."

"That's all there was. There was nothing else to do," Wierbicki jokingly added. "In those days they didn't have drugs and stuff, so we played baseball."

After the end of World War II, both women held jobs at Landers, Frary & Clark, with Greco on the factory floor assembling gun mounts and Wierbicki working in personnel.

"This was right after the war and there were no teams, so the factories got a team together and we played," Wierbicki recalled. "It was called the Factory League. We were just kids back then, only 17 or 18."

Both women signed up to play. Greco was the shortstop while Wierbicki was more of a utility player, filling in where needed.

"It wasn't really a set-up thing. It was a pickup league," Wierbicki said. "It was just whenever the

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coach wanted to play ball, we played ball. We played among ourselves and other factories if they wanted to play, but we just had a good time."

The now-infamous photo was taken during the summer of 1945 and shortly thereafter the league began to dissolve. The women lost touch with each other but recently learned that they had each gotten married on the same day the following year – Sept. 14, 1946.

"And we met again at table 14," Greco said. "It's amazing to have these three things line up, first the baseball, then the wedding date and now to both be here at Middlewoods."

Following her wedding, she moved with her husband to California where she stayed for 10 years before returning with her family to Connecticut. She now has three children, 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren with whom she is able to visit. Her husband died five years ago.

Wierbicki remained in Newington her entire life. A widow for 30 years, she has two sons, one grandson and two great-grandsons. Her living child resides in Canada.

Having lived at Middlewoods for two years already, Wierbicki said she hadn't thought much of it when Greco moved into the facility this past April. The two women were friendly but they didn't recognize each other from their past until looking at the photo.

"I was surprised," Wierbicki said. "I didn't expect to see that, but it's amazing." **RHL**



Photo by Allie Rivera

Residents at Middlewoods of Newington Anna Greco, left, and Cecelia "Nicky" Wierbicki reconnected after 72 years upon discovering that they were former baseball teammates.



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Events *spotlight*

NOLA Benefit Concert

Nov. 17, 6:15 p.m.

Rocky Hill High School auditorium

rhhroyalblues@gmail.org

Come out for a night of music while also benefiting the Rocky Hill High School Band and NOLA programs. The night kicks off with music performed by the RHHS Jazz Band and then comes music by the Funky Dawgz Brass Band, a New Orleans-inspired party band. Tickets are \$15 for general admission, \$10 for students and senior citizens.

St Josephine Bakhita Holiday Fair

Nov. 18, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

St. James Parish Center, 767 Elm St.

860-529-8655 or stjamesrh.org

Get into the holiday spirit and enjoy Christmas shopping at the various crafters and vendors, pick up a gift from the silent auction or teacup auction, or make a purchase from the ornament tree. Some returning features include the stroll down the cookie walk and the bake sale, as well as the marketplace and St. James Café for a bite to eat. Admission is free.

A Celebration of Moser School

Nov. 18, 1-4 p.m.

Community Center, 761 Old Main St.

860-563-6704 or inforhhhistory@gmail.com

The Rocky Hill Historical Society hosts this afternoon of memories of Moser School, which was in operation from 1949 to 2007. There will be a presentation on the Moser family and the school's history, a pictorial history of the school, musical entertainment and an opportunity to see the items that were stored in the recently opened time capsule.

Rocky Hill Athletic Hall of Fame Induction

Nov. 19, 2 p.m.

Wethersfield Country Club, 76 Country Club Road

hof06067@gmail.com

Seven individuals will be the newest inductees into the Rocky Hill Athletic Hall of Fame. They are: Chris Cozza, 2005, football; Josh Manoian, 2001, hockey; Lauren Stock, 2007, basketball; Eric Thorsell, 1999, baseball and basketball; Marco Tirillo, 2000, wrestling; Peter and Trish Egan, John J. McVicar Distinguished Service Award. Tickets are \$35 for adults and \$10 for children under 10. Proceeds will fund scholarships at Rocky Hill High School for deserving college-bound student athletes. **RHL**



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Art clockwise: Katherine Simmons (oil), Jane Zisk (acrylic), Ed Hicks (oil)

November calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

1 **Playgroup Plus**, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, 33 Church St., 860-258-7623 or rockyhillct.gov/library, also Nov. 8, 15, 22 and 29

Coloring for Adults, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 8, 15, 22 and 29

Evening Knitting Group, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 15 and 29

Mystery Book Discussion, 6:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

2 **La Leche League**, 10 a.m. to noon, 23 Textbook Ave., 860-529-2307 or mgubala@sbcglobal.net

ESL Classes, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 9, 16 and 30

Minecraft Club, 4 p.m., for grades 2-5, Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 9, 16 and 30

Minecraft Club, 5:30 p.m., for grades 6-12, Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 9, 16 and 30

VR Headset Demos, 5:45 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 9, 16, 23 and 30

Family Make It, Take It, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 9, 16 and 30

3 **Art Start**, 10:30 a.m., for ages 2 and older, Cora J. Belden Library

4 **Playgroup Plus**, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 11, 18 and 25

Wii U Gaming Club, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

6 SCORE Small Business Counseling, 12:30 p.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

Google Computer Science Workshop, 4 p.m., for grades 6-8, Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 13, 20 and 27

Google Computer Science Workshop: Fashion & Design, 5 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

7 Knitting Group, 11 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 14, 21 and 28

Google Computer Science Workshop: Friends, 4 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Nov. 13, 20 and 27

Writing Workshop, 6:30 p.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

CT Hearing Voices Network support group, 7 p.m., Rocky Hill Congregational Church, 805-817 Old Main St., second floor classroom, 203-391-4968, also Nov. 14, 21 and 28

8 Buying a New Smartphone, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

College Financial Aid 101, 6:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Friends of the Library Board, 7 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

11 Alzheimer's or Dementia Caregivers Support Group, 10 a.m., registration required, The Atrium at Rocky Hill, 1160 Elm St., 860-563-5588 or kpernerewski@benchmarkquality.com

13 Library Board of Trustees, 7 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

14 History Comes to Life: Edgar Allan Poe Night, 6:30 p.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

15 Buying a New Laptop Computer 101, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Girl Power Hour, 4:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

17 LEGO Free Play, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

NOLA Benefit Concert, 6:15 p.m., Rocky Hill High School auditorium

rhhsroyalblues@gmail.org

18 St Josephine Bakhita Holiday Fair, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., St. James Parish Center, 767 Elm St., 860-529-8655 or stjamesrh.org

A Celebration of Moser School, 1-4 p.m., Community Center, 761 Old Main St., 860-563-6704 or inforhhhistory@gmail.com

19 Rocky Hill Athletic Hall of Fame Induction, 2 p.m., Wethersfield Country Club, 76 Country Club Road, hof06067@gmail.com

28 Health & Wellness with Dr. Klughers, 6:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

29 Getting Started with Windows 10, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, 33 Church St., 860-258-7623 or rockyhillct.gov/library

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Letters

Greenspan is his guy

To the Editor:

I write to endorse Allan Greenspan for Town Council. Allan has been a resident of Rocky Hill for over 17 years. He has a long history of serving the town and its children over that span.

Allan has served almost 15 years on the Rocky Hill Little League Board. In addition, in that time he has coached hundreds of kids from town, mostly girls (Including two of my own) as they moved through Little League and on to college. He has a great coaching knack and cares a great deal for the kids and that shows through their responsiveness to him.

In addition, Allan served on the Economic Development Commission, serves on the important Planning and Implementation Committee which works towards the Plan of Conservation and Development, and is currently in his second term on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Allan can bring common-sense leadership and decisiveness to the Town Council, which it deeply needs right now. His current and past service and dedication to the town is to be commended and I believe he would serve the town's residents well on the Town Council.

*- Rocco Sanzo
Former town councilor*

Baio is her choice

To the Editor:

Rocky Hill voters deserve to know the priorities of the candidates running for mayor in this fall's municipal election. Democratic candidate Claudia Baio has clearly stated that hers will build on the achievements of her first term as mayor.

Her first priority is to maintain responsible and responsive town budgets; the current budget holds increased spending to approximately 2 percent with a tax rate of less than one mill. The second priority is support of a strong educational system; more than \$1 million of this year's budget increase is dedicated to the school system.

The third priority is responding to the specific needs of the town's

seniors; the senior task force is already at work analyzing a survey focused on, among other things, the future of senior activities in the community center. The fourth priority is continued preservation of the town's farmland and open space when opportunities arise; development rights for the 70-acre Hintz Farm were protected this year.

The fifth priority is to build upon the progress of job creating and tax-producing economic development projects throughout Rocky Hill; Town Center West has already opened several retail outlets and more are under construction there, and ground has been broken for a new hotel on Route 3.

In addition, Mayor Baio has renewed her commitment to openness and transparency through her frequent coffee hours open to the public, as well as reaching out to all members of the Town Council in a bipartisan manner.

Unfortunately, voters may find it difficult to figure out what other mayoral candidates stand for since one of them is former unaffiliated turned Democrat turned unaffiliated again turned Republican now running as a third-party candidate and the other is a former Democrat turned unaffiliated who is now running as a Republican.

- Marinella Tirillo

Democrats did good job

To the Editor:

One of the most important obligations of the Town Council is to develop an annual budget that accomplishes two goals: meeting the essential needs of our citizens and minimizing the impact on taxpayers. Under the leadership of Mayor Claudia Baio and the Democratic Town Council team, both of those goals were achieved this year.

On the spending side, the Democratic team held the increase to just over 2 percent, or \$1.48 million, with \$1.15 million of the total earmarked for our schoolchildren. Increased education expenditures are necessary principally to meet higher enrollments and transportation costs, contracts covering salaries and health insurance, and the

need to keep up with technology advances.

For the record, the council's Republicans voted against the budget, including the needs of our schools.

The Democratic team also responded to the need to replace the community center's roof, to increase the protection of our citizens provided by the police and fire departments, and to extend modernization of the town's information technology.

Again, for the record, the council's Republicans voted against these three important needs. Even with these necessary additions to the budget, the Democratic team reduced spending in other areas as that the tax rate increase was held to less than one mill.

How does Rocky Hill's 31.6 real property mill rate compare with rates in our neighboring towns? The mill rate in Wethersfield is 39.70. The mill rate in Newington is 36.59. The mill rate in Cromwell is 33.93 and Cromwell's residents have to pay additional fire district taxes.

Mayor Baio and the Democratic team have clearly demonstrated they know how to provide the town with a responsible and responsive budget without overburdening taxpayers.

- Bill Pacella

Baio has done well

To the Editor:

During the local election campaign two years ago Democratic mayoral candidate Claudia Baio pledged to Rocky Hill residents that she would place the needs and wishes of the town's seniors among her top priorities for the years ahead. She has kept her promise.

As one of her first acts after being elected in 2015, Mayor Baio appointed a more inclusive and elaborate Senior Liaison Committee which hired a nationally recognized senior center consultant. Republican members of the Town Council opposed this logical and forward-looking step.

The consultant quickly sought input from the town's seniors through a comprehensive survey which yielded a higher than average return rate. The survey was followed by several

public forums, meetings with seniors and town staff, and several public presentations by the consultant.

The consultant provided the town with two alternatives: a complete renovation of facilities for seniors within the existing community center or construction of a new stand-alone building. Two months ago the Town Council authorized a request for proposal to hire an architect to determine the feasibility of these alternatives.

Eight architects responded with interest and participated in a walk-through at the community center.

Mayor Baio and the Democratic team plan to place a viable long-term solution for our seniors on the November 2018 ballot so that town voters will have a voice in the direction the town should take on behalf of those who have contributed so much to Rocky Hill, our seniors.

In short, Mayor Baio and the Democratic team made a promise, gathered information in a thoughtful and well-planned process, listened to the town's seniors, and are now prepared to move forward in a positive direction. This is the team that deserves the support of Rocky Hill voters on Nov. 7.

- Wendell and Susan Coogan

Bell endorses Vargas

To the Editor:

For the past 18 years I have had the distinct opportunity to work with Cathy Vargas in my capacity as a town official. We served 10 years on the Board of Education and eight on the Town Council together.

Cathy and I navigated our children's teenage years, high school and college graduations, weddings, grandchildren and yes, we officially became seniors together. In the 18 years of working together I have never met anyone with such meticulous attention to detail.

She has been an incredible asset to the town of Rocky Hill. Her financial skills have had a significant impact in reducing numerous town budgets.

Cathy takes the time to research all sides of an issue before making informed, fact-based decisions. She

Letters

continued

has served on countless subcommittees, giving her a uniquely unparalleled experience. Please join me in supporting Cathy Vargas for Town Council and the entire Unite Rocky Hill slate on Nov. 7.

- Nadine Bell

Baio deserves another term

To the Editor:

I urge Rocky Hill voters to support Claudia Baio for re-election as mayor, not just because of her outstanding service for the past two years as the town's chief executive officer, and not because of her excellent reputation as a practicing attorney.

Her long and distinguished involvement in many community activities is just one more feather in her cap. I've known Claudia since the days when our sons were students at West Hill School. She was active at the school as a room parent, as an adult volunteer with the parent-teacher organization, as chairman of the school's fifth grade yearbook and as a coordinator for the school's artworks fundraiser.

She assisted at various parks and recreation sports and activities. She was a leader in the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce, serving on its board of directors and as president. She was also deeply involved with the Boy Scouts up to and including work as scoutmaster.

She carried over her commitment to educational excellence while serving as mayor, working with the Board of Education to establish the town's first bipartisan school building committee to insure the best possible outcome for the planned intermediate school on the site of the former Moser School.

Claudia brings to our town an intense dedication to public service as well as an energetic commitment to community service. Rocky Hill voters could not do better than to support Mayor Baio and her Democratic team for re-election on Nov. 7.

- Lia Safalow

It's time for a change

To the Editor:

Municipal elections are coming Nov. 7. Can anyone seriously argue that the mess our state finances are in won't have a huge impact, not only

on Rocky Hill's finances, but on our quality of life, too?

The time has come to change the administration of our state government in Hartford to one that is not controlled by an unholy relationship with the labor unions. That process needs to start with the upcoming municipal elections to ensure the right people are in place locally and are willing to help accomplish the changes we need in Hartford in 2018.

For that reason, I am supporting Lisa Marotta for mayor and the entire Team Rocky Hill slate. I know Lisa Marotta from working with her on her campaign for Town Council in 2013. I have supported her work with the education foundation.

Lisa is an unbiased, results-driven leader who is eager to work for today and plan for our future. She has the proven ability to look beyond party lines and move agendas forward.

Lisa Marotta is a doer with a proven passion for advocating for the needs of our entire community. She's not afraid to stand up for what she believes in and she always looks for solutions that empower others to succeed.

Change starts at the local level. Change starts with Lisa Marotta.

- Paul Carr

Vasel gets his vote

To the Editor:

What is happening in Rocky Hill? At a recent Town Council meeting the Democratic chairman of the town manager search committee stated essentially that he doesn't want to spend the money to hire a search company in this economic environment and the interim town manager is doing a good job.

Really? As a taxpayer in tough economic times I want a finance director to be spending 100 percent of his time on the town finances, not trying to handle two jobs [also] taking the role of an interim town manager.

It has been 10 months we have been without a full-time town manager. There is no sense of urgency from the Democratic majority to even fill the position of town manager. How can that be?

After failing to get the support to hire a new town attorney, Mayor Baio abandoned the effort. After failing to secure the necessary votes to

hire our finance director as the new town manager, she circumvented the town charter and elected to keep the finance director as an interim director, slow walking the search for a replacement.

She ignored a letter submitted by the minority party to fast track the search for a new candidate. This is not the leadership that Rocky Hill needs. I support Henry Vasel for mayor. He has shown as a former mayor that he can identify problems and implement solutions in a timely manner.

- Gerry Henri

Supports his wife for office

To the Editor:

Cathy Vargas, my wife, is uniquely experienced and is committed to the town of Rocky Hill. Cathy has served the town of Rocky Hill for the past 18 years, 10 years on the Board of Education and the past eight years on the Town Council.

She has served on many subcommittees, spent countless hours studying, researching and fighting for the issues that she believes are in the best interest of the town of Rocky Hill. We have been residents of Rocky Hill for over 30 years, sending our children through the Rocky Hill schools, seeing them graduate, go to college and begin their careers and start their families.

Cathy and I celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary last month and I wish the voters of Rocky Hill could know my wife Cathy as I do – a kind, caring and passionate individual who cares deeply for our town. In uncertain times we need Cathy's experience and insight.

Please join me in supporting Cathy Vargas for Town Council and the entire Unite Rocky Hill slate on Nov. 7.

- David Vargas

Cites a failure to lead

To the Editor:

If you read the political ads, you would think under the leadership of Mayor Baio the town of Rocky Hill is running as a well-oiled machine. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Last fall, the Democratic majority felt the need to hire a new town attorney. They fell short of the need-

ed votes because one of their members missed the meeting. Mayor Baio never followed through with another vote, never reached across the aisle to the minority to reach consensus on another candidate.

The same attorney was the one who issued the flawed opinion when the Democratic majority attempted to reinterpret the town charter to allow the appointment of a town manager with only five votes rather than six. The town charter states a new town manager should be appointed within 180 days in the event of termination or suspension; it doesn't specifically address resignation, but the intent is 180 days.

Our outstanding Finance Director John Mehr now has been heroically acting as town manager for almost 10 months. After a failed attempt to appoint him permanent town manager, Mayor Baio has been dragging her feet in the search for another candidate.

The most recent excuse was we did not put a line item in the budget to search for town manager. Money is tight. What is the risk? We have one individual (who lives out of town) trying to do the two biggest jobs in town for over 10 months.

People get sick, need vacation, family emergencies arise. If this were to happen, Rocky Hill could be without a town manager and finance director. Then what? One of the most important tasks of a council is to hire a town manager, the CEO of the town. Mayor Baio gets an F.

I support Henry Vasel for mayor. He has the experience as our former mayor of hiring a town manager, trimming budgets, planning infrastructure projects and guiding the town during tight economic times.

- John Burns

Endorses Marotta

To the Editor:

I am writing today to endorse Lisa Marotta and Team Rocky Hill for Town Council and Board of Education. Lisa Marotta has proven that she truly cares about the town's residents and future.

Four years ago, she was involved in Stay Accredited, helping pass the referendum for Rocky Hill High School, and when the town needed her again, she pulled through to

form Stay Invested, which helped pass the referendum for the new intermediate school.

Serving on the Board of Education the past four years, I can speak first hand to the great respect I have for our current Board Chair Frank Morse. Mr. Morse seamlessly works across party lines to do what's best for Rocky Hill.

In instances where board members aren't in agreement, Mr. Morse goes out of his way to find common ground in an approachable, but direct, manner. He is open-minded and will listen to opinions of all board members before making an informed decision.

Other members include: seasoned members Brian Dillon, an engineer with two school-age children who has great ability to see the bigger picture in any situation and Jennifer Allison, a lawyer also with two school-age children who has a vested interest in the schools but also a passion to do what is best for the taxpayers.

Dilip Desai is a long-time Board of Education member who is extremely reliable and dedicated to do what's best. I am thrilled that Kim Kehoe, a mom of two and current classroom teacher, is running as a candidate. Kim is dedicated, sharp, friendly, and is familiar with all current issues in education.

A vote for Team Rocky Hill as a whole allows the Board of Education to continue to make giant strides forward for our community.

In the two terms I served, the Board of Education made tremendous strides. In four years, we implemented full-day kindergarten, passed the renovation of Rocky Hill High School, implemented school resource officers, installed air conditioning at Griswold Middle School, supported installation of sprinklers at the elementary schools and kept class size down.

Most recently, we voted to build an intermediate school with a focus on STEM curriculum and will introduce foreign language the lower grade level. On Nov. 7 I urge you to keep the momentum going and vote for Lisa Marotta and all the members of Team Rocky Hill.

— Danielle Plona

Favors Lindenberger

To the Editor:

I'm writing this letter to endorse candidate Ralph "Larry" Lindenberger for Rocky Hill Town Council. As an unaffiliated candidate with Unite Rocky Hill, I feel Larry can contribute independent opinions and decisions based on the good and welfare of the town and not be swayed by party politics.

Larry has volunteered years of service to the town as a volunteer firefighter and served on various commissions as well. He seems to be the "go-to" person when things need to be done and I believe a fresh attitude is needed, as town issues seem to be deadlocked by party lines.

Why is there still no town manager? Why the high cost overruns with the high school project?

A different voice and a different type of party leadership is needed that puts the residents first over egos and attitudes which have stalled the town's forward movement. I support Larry Lindenberger and the entire Unite Rocky Hill Team.

— Ralph Lexa

Backing Allison and Addy

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my support for Jennifer Allison for the Board of Education and Bryan Addy for Town Council. Both Jenn and Bryan are running on the Team Rocky Hill slate in the upcoming November election.

I have the privilege of knowing both candidates personally and am honored to call them my friends. I feel that they are both very qualified candidates for their respective roles.

Jenn is seeking re-election to her third term in office. As the mother of two young children, ages 11 and 6, Jenn knows the importance of a strong school system and firmly believes that good schools are the foundation of our town and its long-term viability.

During her involvement over the last four years the schools in Rocky Hill have seen immense improvement, starting with the implementation of all-day kindergarten. Our schools have undergone major renovations including fire sprinkler and security upgrades, ADA compliance improvements, a near total overhaul

of the high school creating a state-of-the-art learning facility for grades 9-12, and the successful passing of the new intermediate school referendum voted on by taxpayers.

Jenn brings a keen eye to the table when it comes to fiscal responsibility, which is critically important during this current budget crisis our state is experiencing. She is mindful that the wants and needs of the town must be balanced with the impact on taxpayers and always looks for the most cost-effective way of implementing change both to the district's curriculum and facilities.

Bryan Addy is seeking election to Town Council after serving on several town committees including the Public Building Commission and the School Building Committee. Bryan was also the co-chair of the Stay Invested group led by Lisa Marotta last year.

Through his volunteer work on the various committees Bryan has had a taste of small-town politics (good and bad) and would like to get more involved. He brings many strengths to the table from his professional career including his proven track record of effective leadership and project management, as well as his ability to think creatively and differently to influence change.

Bryan's fresh perspective is exactly what our town needs. If you too would like to see change, I encourage you to join me in voting for Jenn Allison, Bryan Addy and the rest of Team Rocky Hill slate on Nov. 7.

— Stacey Uccello

Likes Levine

To the Editor:

I am writing to offer my wholehearted support for Jeff Levine, Republican candidate for Town Council. Mr. Levine possesses the qualities of a good leader and he is an excellent role model for our community.

I have lived in Rocky Hill since 2003 and have known Mr. Levine for the better part of those years. I have always known Jeff to be a kind-hearted gentleman who has the common-sense approach and drive needed to make a difference in our town.

Jeff Levine holds strong family values. As a member of the Town Council, Jeff Levine will represent the people of the town honorably

and ensure that our voices are heard. Mr. Levine has the initiative and dedication to make a difference in our town and deserves your vote on Election Day.

— Kathy Morgan

Democrats deserve two more years

To the Editor:

An effective mayor and Town Council serve Rocky Hill citizens best when they deal efficiently with present needs but also plan carefully and thoughtfully to counter future challenges. Mayor Claudia Baio and the Democratic council team have met both needs and deserve the endorsement of the town's voters on Nov. 7.

First, as to present needs. The Democrats held this year's tax increase to less than one mill to make sure essential needs are met, including an increase of \$1.15 million for students served by the Board of Education, strengthening the police and fire departments, and replacing the roof at the community center. It's worth pointing out that council Republicans opposed this tight budget.

Second, as to future challenges, the Rocky Hill council was faced with the prospect of losing a substantial amount of state financial aid because the state of Connecticut failed to agree on its own budget for some three-and-a-half months. Instead of sitting around hoping for the best, Mayor Baio and the Democratic team moved forcefully to prepare for the worst.

Taking advantage of the Board of Education's return of surplus funds to the town, the Democratic team set aside a majority of the surplus into a reserve fund. It delayed an education storage project, pending the outcome of the state's financial difficulties.

Further, last year the town received some \$185,000 in state aid that originally was scheduled to be cut. Instead of spending it, the Democratic team set it aside as a hedge against a possible state-aid shortfall this year.

Finally, by holding Rocky Hill's tax rate to less than 32 mills (31.6, significantly less than the rates in Newington, Wethersfield and Cromwell), the town was able to send out its tax bills on time. This

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KEITH TURLEY, Publisher

EDITORIAL

Abigail Albair, Executive Editor
aalbair@turleyct.com

Mark Jahne, Editor

John Fitts, Assistant Editor

Alicia B. Smith, Associate Editor

STAFF WRITERS

Allie Rivera, Mara Dresner,
David Heuschkel, Sloan Brewster

ADVERTISING SALES

Alana DiMarco
alana@turleyct.com,
860-264-5723

PAGE DESIGNERS

Daniel Kornegay, Cynthia Martel,
Robert Sirois

GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT

Barbara Ouellette, Production Manager
ads@turleyct.com, 860-264-5523
Maureen LaBier, Production Assistant
Daniel Kornegay, Corley Fleming, Cynthia Martel,
Kathy Kokoszka, Mary Grimes

CIRCULATION

For circulation issues, please call 860-651-4700

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Editorial

Vote, because you can

There will be an election Nov. 7, as there is every November for one office or another. The 2017 election is all about this town. It's casting a ballot for those fellow residents who have put themselves before the public to serve on the Town Council, Board of Education and other bodies.

More people vote in presidential elections and they should not be discouraged from doing that. But the simple truth is that no election has greater impact upon us than the municipal one.

Residents will be selecting the people who determine how this town will be run. They will determine the services they receive as taxpayers, how their children are educated and protected while in school, and so much more.

The people on the ballot are also the people who will determine how much each business and homeowner pays in property taxes. That impacts most families more than anything that happens at the state or national levels of government.

These men and women are community volunteers who are willing to spend a significant amount of their time serving the greater good. They may have different political parties, approaches and philosophies, but they all have the same goal – to do the best they can for this

town, its people and its schools.

They are not in it for personal gain. The mayor does not get a paycheck for doing this. Neither does any member of the council or school board. Not even a modest stipend. Nothing.

There are places around the world where people do not have the right to vote or are struggling to acquire it. There are places where people are willing to stand in line for an hour or more to cast their ballot.

The right to vote is one of the greatest individual liberties Americans enjoy. Yet more and more people don't bother to participate in the political process until it's time to pick a president.

Local elections have at times been decided by only a handful of votes. Each vote cast in a municipal election truly matters.

Vote because it's your right. Vote because it's your civic responsibility. Vote to make a difference. Vote simply because you can.

It only takes a few minutes to go to the polling place, walk into the building, fill out a ballot and then go about the rest of the day or evening. That's not an imposition.

Show that you care about your town by participating in one of most special and treasured American traditions.

Letters

continued

Will vote for Lanciotto

To the Editor:

I am writing to provide a personal endorsement for Andrew Lanciotto, a 20-year-old young man from Rocky Hill who has chosen at his young age to run for Town Council as a proud Republican. Born and raised in this town, Andrew has been active in this community since early youth.

While in middle school he assisted with special needs peers by volunteering in best buddy-like programs. He enjoyed playing parks and recreation youth sports such as basketball, soccer, football, and baseball. Upon entering high school he continued with volunteer service towards special

needs programs and also spent time volunteering at multiple senior centers.

As he became of age he proceeded to work as a supervisor for youth basketball and also gives back every year by volunteering his time to be a youth basketball coach. After graduation from Rocky Hill High School in 2015 he went on to pursue his secondary education at Central Connecticut State University, where he has been extremely active on campus and off campus.

In only his freshman year, Andrew was elected, and still sits, as vice president of the Central Connecticut State University Republicans, and during his sophomore year he

Letters continued

was elected as political director for the Connecticut Federation of College Republicans, in which he still remains.

I personally have never seen a young man of his age more dedicated and driven to help bring about such positive necessary changes to a society with such complex issues. As I saw him moving even further along and now involving himself in town politics by joining the Republican Town Committee early last year, I knew he meant business.

He came home and said, "Mom, I want to make this town the best it can be because this is where I want to raise my family." After being approached, he personally made the decision to run on the Republican ticket along side Lisa Marotta and some other very well-qualified candidates.

He firmly believes that it is time for change and I believe that he will be an invaluable asset to all citizens in Rocky Hill who are ready to elect a team that will bring about some much-needed change.

— *Tracy Lanciotta*

Baio provides leadership

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter on behalf and support of our mayor of Rocky Hill, Claudia Baio. Rocky Hill needs the continuation of the stellar leadership of our Mayor Claudia Baio. We need to get her reelected with your votes to continue the economic growth of Rocky Hill.

It is your duty as a citizen in any town, city or state to get out and vote at every single election in your area. We cannot function on any level without the support of everyone. Please get out and vote for Claudia Baio, who will continue the cultural, economic and educational growth of Rocky Hill to bring our town to the next level of expertise.

Our team has watched Claudia well received, respected and supported in our community. This is the leadership we need to see in every town, city and state to move progressively forward and inclusive of all who reside in Rocky Hill.

Claudia brings a very diversified and visionary leadership to our com-

munity and to anyone who crosses her path. We need to continue on this level for the well being of each and every citizen here in Rocky Hill.

— *Judi Murphy*

Lindenberger is the pick

To the Editor:

I wanted to endorse Ralph "Larry" Lindenberger for Rocky Hill Town Council. I have known him for over three decades and can attest that he embodies several qualities which make him an ideal person of responsibility.

His peers would describe him as composed, generous and pragmatic. I have seen these characteristics in action during his time with the Rocky Hill Fire Department, wetlands committee, as well as his interactions within the community.

What distinguishes Ralph from other candidates is his commitment to the people. Born and raised in Rocky Hill, I lived in town until I began a life and family of my own. When it came time to purchase a home I considered buying in town.

My wife and I are both working professionals looking to settle down in an area that shares a strong sense of community.

We are financially competent people and after reviewing our projected budget found that the taxes in Rocky Hill would simply cost us more than the other towns in which we were looking. I returned to Rocky Hill recently and was elated to hear that Ralph was running for Town Council.

I am a young conservative voter who is active in my community. When it comes to local politics, I am a fierce critic. Too often, I have seen the cycle of partisan allegiance interfere with how a council member represents their constituency.

Ralph Lindenberger is the type of individual with the emotional fortitude to speak, and most importantly act, on behalf of the people. I believe Ralph and the entire Unite Rocky Hill team have both the residents' best interests in mind, as well the awareness that they themselves represent the people of Rocky Hill.

— *Ryan Oliver*



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